

SACRED HISTORY

SELECTED FROM

THE SCRIPTURES,

WITH

ANNOTATIONS

AND

REFLECTIONS,

SUITED TO THE

COMPREHENSION OF YOUNG MINDS:

Particularly calculated to facilitate the

STUDY of the HOLY SCRIPTURES in SCHOOLS and FAMILIES, and to render this important Branch of EDUCATION easy to the TEACHER, and pleasing to the PUPIL.

VOL. III.

From David's Victory over Goliath, to Ahab's conquest of Ben-hadad King of Syria.

By Mrs. TRIMMER.

L O N D O N :

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SECT.

SECT. I.

WAR WITH THE PHILISTINES—SAUL AGAIN
SEEKETH TO KILL DAVID—HE ESCAPETH—
SAUL PURSUETH HIM—MICHAL SAVETH HIS
LIFE—DAVID FLEETH TO SAMUEL—SAUL
AND HIS SERVANTS PROPHECY.

AND there was war again: and David
went out and fought with the Philis-
tines, and slew them with a great slaughter;
and they fled from him.

And the evil spirit from the LORD was
upon Saul, as he sat in his house with his
javelin in his hand: and David played with
his hand.

And Saul fought to smite David even to
the wall with the javelin: but he slipped
away out of Saul's presence, and he smote
the javelin into the wall: and David fled,
and escaped that night.

Saul also sent messengers unto David's
house, to watch him and to slay him in the
morning: and Michal, David's wife, told

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him,

him, saying, If thou save not thy life to-night, to-morrow thou shalt be slain.

So Michal let David down through a window: and he went and fled, and escaped.

And Michal took an image, and laid it in the bed, and put a pillow of goat's hair for his bolster, and covered it with a cloth.

And when Saul sent messengers to take David, she said, He is sick.

And Saul sent the messengers again to see David, saying, Bring him up to me in the bed, that I may slay him.

And when the messengers were come in, behold there was an image in the bed with a pillow of goats hair for his bolster.

And Saul said unto Michal, Why hast thou deceived me so, and sent away mine enemy, that he is escaped? and Michal answered Saul, He said unto me, Let me go? why should I kill thee?

So David fled, and escaped, and came to Samuel to Ramah, and told him all that Saul had done to him. And he and Samuel went and-dwelt in Naioth.

And it was told Saul, saying, Behold, David is at Naioth in Ramah.

And

SAUL PROPHESIETH.

§

And Saul sent messengers to take David: and when they saw the company of the prophets prophesying, and Samuel standing, as appointed over them, the Spirit of God was upon the messengers of Saul, and they also prophesied.

And when it was told Saul, he sent other messengers, and they prophesied likewise. And Saul sent messengers again the third time, and they prophesied also.

Then went he also to Ramah, and came to a great well that is in Sechu: and he asked and said, Where are Samuel and David? and one said, Behold they be at Naioth in Ramah.

And he went thither to Naioth in Ramah: and the Spirit of God was upon him also, and he went on and prophesied, until he came to Naioth in Ramah.

And he stripped off his clothes also, and prophesied before Samuel in like manner, and lay down naked all that day and all that night. Wherefore they say, Is Saul also among the prophets.

ANNOTATIONS AND REFLECTIONS.

The acclamations of the people on account of David's success, awakened the envy of Saul; and he again provoked the LORD to permit the *evil Spirit* to afflict him. David, with his usual benevolence, endeavoured to bring his thoughts back to God by his holy melody; but the kind experiment failed, and had not the LORD preserved him, he must have fallen a victim to Saul's jealousy, which now knew no bounds, for he was absolutely bent on David's destruction, forgetful of the solemn oath he had so lately made; but the LORD again preserved him.

Saul's cruelty was very great, in ordering a sick man to be brought, that he might slay him; but Michal's deceit and falsehood cannot be justified, and it is supposed that she was addicted to idolatry, by her having an image in her possession, and by her ridiculing David afterwards, for paying honour to the Ark of God: what she said to Saul implied, that David had threatened to kill her, which furnished Saul with a fresh pretence for persecuting him; whilst David's house was watched to prevent his escape, he is supposed to have made the following prayer to God.

A PRAYER OF DAVID †.

Deliver me from mine enemies, O my God: defend me from them that rise up against me.

Deliver me from the workers of iniquity, and save me from bloody men.

† Psalm lix.

DAVID'S PRAYER.

5

For lo, they lie in wait for my soul; the mighty are gathered against me: not for my transgression, nor for my sin, O LORD.

They run and prepare themselves without my fault; awake to help me, and behold.

They return at evening: they make a noise like a dog, and go round about the city.

But thou O LORD, shalt laugh at them:

Because of his strength will I wait upon thee: for GOD is my defence.

The GOD of mercy shall prevent me: GOD shall let me see my desire upon mine enemies.

But I will sing of thy power: yea, I will sing aloud of thy mercy in the morning: for thou hast been my defence and refuge in the day of my trouble.

Unto thee, O my strength, will I sing: for GOD is my defence, and the GOD of my mercy.*

David was surrounded with such difficulties, that he knew not what course to take; he therefore fled to Samuel, in order to learn the will of GOD, who took him to the school of the prophets at Naioth, concluding that Saul would let him abide there in peace; but you find that no place was sacred in his sight, he cared not for GOD, nor religious institutions; and therefore sent messengers thither to seize David; but instead of executing their commission, they were actuated by a sudden holy impulse, as Saul formerly had been, and

* As some parts of the foregoing psalm require a particular explanation, I have omitted them, because such comments would interrupt the history; and this rule will be observed respecting those psalms in general, that shall be occasionally introduced.

joined with the congregation *in praising* God. Saul was resolved to effect his purpose, but was prevented; being obliged, against his will, *to utter the words of divine inspiration*; and was so overcome by the Spirit of the LORD, that he fell into a kind of trance, and having pulled off his royal robes, (which is what is meant by his being naked) lay on the ground all night.

It may seem strange to us to read of Saul's being at one time *inspired by the LORD*, and at another, *actuated by an EVIL SPIRIT*; but we must remember, that it was in the LORD's power to *restrain the evil Spirit*; and you find, that he did not *constantly* torment Saul, only on those occasions when he gave way to passions that were inconsistent with his duty: he had long intervals of reason, and should have humbled himself and repented: as he did not do so, it was just to afflict him, and it does not become us to censure the dispensations of infinite wisdom.

SECT.

S E C T. II.

DAVID CONSULTETH WITH JONATHAN FOR HIS SAFETY—THEIR COVENANT RENEWED—SAUL SEEKETH TO KILL JONATHAN—DAVID FLEETH TO NOB AND OBTAINETH GOLIATH'S SWORD—HE GOETH TO ACHISH THE KING OF GATH, IS REFUSED PROTECTION, AND REPAIRETH TO A CAVE AT ADULLAM.

AND David fled from Naioth in Ramah, and came and said before Jonathan, What have I done? what is mine iniquity? and what is my sin before thy father, that he seeketh my life?

And he said unto him, God forbid; thou shalt not die: behold, my father will do nothing either great or small, but that he will shew it me: and why should my father hide this thing from me? it is not so.

And David sware moreover, and said, Thy father certainly knoweth that I have found grace in thine eyes; and he saith, Let

not Jonathan know this, lest he be grieved. But truly as the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, there is but a step between me and death.

Then said Jonathan unto David, Whatsoever thy soul desireth, I will even do it for thee.

And David said unto Jonathan, Behold, to-morrow is the new-moon, and I should not fail to sit with the king at meat: but let me go that I may hide myself in the field unto the third day at even.

If thy father at all miss me, then say, David earnestly asked leave of me that he might run to Beth-lehem his city: for there is a yearly sacrifice there for all the family.

If he say thus, It is well; thy servant shall have peace: but if he be very wroth, then be sure that evil is determined by him.

Therefore thou shalt deal kindly with thy servant; for thou hast brought thy servant into a covenant of the LORD with thee: notwithstanding, if there be in me iniquity, slay me thyself: for why shouldst thou bring me to thy father.

And Jonathan said, Far be it from thee: for if I knew certainly that evil were determined

mined by my father to come upon thee, then would not I tell it thee?

Then said David to Jonathan, Who shall tell me? or what if thy father answer thee roughly?

And Jonathan said unto David, Come, and let us go out into the field. And they went out both of them into the field.

And Jonathan said unto David, O LORD God of Israel, when I have sounded my father about to-morrow any time, or the third day, and behold, if there be good toward David, and I then send not unto thee, and shew it thee;

The LORD do so and much more to Jonathan. But if it please my father to do thee evil, then I will shew it thee, and send thee away, that thou mayest go in peace: and the LORD be with thee, as he hath been with my father.

And thou shalt not only while yet I live shew me the kindness of the LORD that I die not:

But also, thou shalt not cut off thy kindness from my house for ever: no, not when the LORD hath cut off the enemies of David every one from the face of the earth.

10 DAVID AND JONATHAN'S COVENANT.

So Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, Let the LORD even require it at the hand of David's enemies.

And Jonathan caused David to swear again, because he loved him: for he loved him as he loved his own soul.

Then Jonathan said to David, To-morrow is the new-moon; and thou shalt be missed, because thy seat will be empty.

And when thou hast stayed three days, then thou shalt go down quickly, and come to the place where thou didst hide thyself when the business was in hand, and shalt remain by the stone Ezel.

And I will shoot three arrows on the side thereof, as though I shot at a mark.

And behold, I will send a lad, saying, Go, find out the arrows. If I expressly say unto the lad, Behold, the arrows are on this side of thee, take them; then come thou: for there is peace to thee, and no hurt; as the LORD liveth.

But if I say thus unto the young man, Behold, the arrows are beyond thee; go thy way, for the LORD hath sent thee away.

And

And as touching the matter which thou and I have spoken of, behold, the LORD be between thee and me for ever.

So David hid himself in the field: and when the new-moon was come, the king sat him down to eat meat.

And the king sat upon his seat as at other times, even upon a seat by the wall: and Jonathan arose, and Abner sat by Saul's side, and David's place was empty.

Nevertheless Saul spake not any thing that day: for he thought, Something hath befallen him.

And it came to pass on the morrow, which was the second day of the month, that David's place was empty: and Saul said unto Jonathan his son, Wherefore cometh not the son of Jesse to meat, neither yesterday, nor to day?

And Jonathan answered Saul, David earnestly asked leave of me to go to Bethlehem;

And he said, Let me go, I pray thee: for our family hath a sacrifice in the city; and my brother he hath commanded me to be there: and now if I have found favour in thine eyes, let me get away, I pray thee, and

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see my brethren. Therefore he cometh not unto the king's table.

Then Saul's anger was kindled against Jonathan, and he said, Thou hast chosen the son of Jesse to thine own confusion :

For as long as the son of Jesse liveth upon the ground, thou shalt not be established, nor thy kingdom. Wherefore now send and fetch him unto me ? for he shall surely die.

And Jonathan answered Saul his father, and said unto him, Wherefore shall he be slain ? what hath he done ?

And Saul cast a javelin at him to smite him : whereby Jonathan knew that it was determined of his father to slay David.

So Jonathan arose from the table in fierce anger, and did eat no meat the second day of the month : for he was grieved for David, because his father had done him shame.

And it came to pass in the morning, that Jonathan went out into the field at the time appointed with David, and a little lad with him.

And he said unto his lad, Run, find out now the arrows which I shoot. And as the lad ran, he shot an arrow beyond him.

And

And when the lad was come to the place of the arrow which Jonathan had shot, Jonathan cried after the lad, and said, Is not the arrow beyond thee?

And Jonathan cried after the lad, Make speed, haste, stay not. And Jonathan's lad gathered up the arrows, and came to his master.

But the lad knew not any thing: only Jonathan and David knew the matter.

And Jonathan gave his artillery unto his lad, and said unto him, Go, carry them to the city.

And as soon as the lad was gone, David arose out of a place toward the south, and fell on his face to the ground, and bowed himself three times: and they kissed one another, and wept one with another, until David exceeded.

And Jonathan said to David, Go in peace, forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the name of the LORD, saying, The LORD be between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed for ever. And he arose and departed. And Jonathan went into the city.

ANNO-

ANNOTATIONS AND REFLECTIONS.

Are you not charmed, my dear, with the noble disinterested behaviour of Jonathan to David? The beautiful relation of it, which you have just read, is very affecting. Poor David, driven from his sacred retreat, took the advantage of fleeing while Saul lay entranced, but where could he seek for shelter from the future effects of his rage? In this extreme perplexity, he hastened to his dear friend, who he knew would take a tender part in his distress, and pour the balm of consolation into his afflicted mind. Jonathan was so moved with the terror which David suffered, that he promised to do whatever he should require of him, knowing that he had too much integrity to desire him to commit a sinful action; he therefore contrived a plan in order to discover, whether the extraordinary event which had lately befallen Saul, had made any change in his sentiments towards David; and to encourage David to repose entire confidence in him, Jonathan renewed the solemn covenant he had formerly made with him.

It was customary to offer sacrifices, and keep religious feasts every month for two days, at the first appearance of the new moon; and David had a right to a seat at the royal table, as he was the king's son-in-law; though Saul disdaining his alliance, contemptuously called him, the "*son of Jesse*;" and on Jonathan's offering to excuse him, you find, he fell into a furious rage, treated him with the most opprobrious language, and accused him of meanness of spirit, for not destroying a man
who

DAVID'S DISTRESS. 15

who would rob him of his birth-right: but Jonathan seems to have understood, that the LORD had appointed David to succeed to the kingdom; and was so perfectly convinced of his innocence, that he resolved to plead for him, though at the hazard of his life; and when his father's inhuman behaviour drove him from his presence, he was more concerned for his friend than for himself.

As soon as David was made acquainted by the appointed sign, with Saul's implacable disposition towards him, he came forth from his hiding-place, to cast himself at the feet of his kind benefactor; for his gratitude was too great for utterance, and the reflection that he must leave this generous faithful friend, perhaps for ever, gave him such exquisite anguish as tears only could express. Jonathan well understood the meaning of this pathetic behaviour, and returned his embraces with all the fervour of tender friendship; and in order to comfort David, reminded him of the solemn agreement they had made to be mutually true to each others interest.

When Jonathan left him and returned back to the city, David suffered the most violent perturbations of mind; and perhaps, the severe necessity he was under of parting with his dear companion and faithful comforter, made him suppose that God had *forsaken* him; for instead of applying to the LORD for succour, he had recourse to such stratagems as could only be suggested by despair: nay, he was even guilty of a *violation of truth*, for he went to Nob, where the Tabernacle was, and pretending that he came on hasty business from the king, he obtained from Abimelech the high-priest, the sword

sword of Goliath, and with that very weapon by his side, with which he had beheaded the mighty champion of Gath, went to that city to seek refuge. Whether David's reason was so disturbed by his misfortunes, that he was incapable of reflection; or whether he acted the madman through policy, as the only means of saving his life, is difficult to decide; but he was treated as a person beside himself, and Achish, the king of Gath, refused to entertain him; he therefore retired from thence, and having no earthly friend to flee to, went and hid himself in a cave at Adullam, where he might be safe at least for a time, from the persecution of Saul. "It * was a place fortified by nature, and so fitted for the security of persons in distress, that we are told, it has frequently given refuge from the Turks to Christians, who have fled thither with their flocks and herds."

When David's relations heard how Saul had treated him, they had reason to fear that he would extend his malice to them also; they therefore repaired to the cave of Adullam, in order to concert measures for their security; and many others, whom distress or oppression had driven into exile, came to join David, supposing that he would endeavour to supplant Saul, so that he soon had 400 men under his command; amongst whom were *Joab, Abishai, Benaiah, and eleven other brave officers*, "who could handle shield and buckler; whose faces were like the faces of lions, and were swift as the roes upon the mountains." Filial piety, for which David was remarkable, made him very so-

* Delany's Life of King David.

licitous for the safety of his parents ; he therefore procured a place of refuge for them in the land of Moab, which the king of that country might grant on account of Jesse's descent from Ruth, who was a Moabitefs.

Soon after this, the prophet Gad, was sent to command David to go into the land of Judah, so he departed, and came into the wilderness of Hareth. " In the * midst of the dangers and troubles that surrounded him, he is supposed to have penned the following psalm : "

A PRAYER OF DAVID†.

O GOD, thou art my GOD, early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is :

To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.

Because thy loving kindness is better than life: my lips shall praise thee.

Thus will I bless thee, while I live I will lift up my hands in thy name.

My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips :

When I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night-watches.

Because thou hast been my help; therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice.

My soul followeth hard after thee: thy right hand upholdeth me.

* Chandler's Life of King David.

† Psalm lxiii.

S E C T. III.

SAUL PURSUETH DAVID—DOEG ACCUSETH
AHIMELECH—SAUL COMMANDETH TO KILL
THE PRIESTS—ABIATHAR ESCAPING BRING-
ETH THE NEWS TO DAVID—DAVID RESCUETH
KEILAH.

AND there came of the children of Benjamin, and Judah, to the hold unto David.

And David went out to meet them, and answered and said unto them, If ye be come peaceably unto me to help me, my heart shall be knit unto you: but if ye be come to betray me to mine enemies, seeing there is no wrong in mine hands, the God of our fathers look thereon, and rebuke it.

Then the Spirit came upon Amasai, who was the chief of the captains, and he said, Thine are we, David, and on thy side, thou son of Jesse: peace, peace be unto thee, and peace be to thine helpers; for thy God help-

eth

eth thee. Then David received them and made them captains of the band.

When Saul heard that David was discovered, and the men that were with him, (now Saul abode in Gibeah under a tree in Ramah: having his spear in his hand, and all his servants were standing about him.)

Then Saul said unto his servants that stood about him, Hear now, ye Benjamites, will the son of Jesse give every one of you fields and vineyards, and make you all captains of thousands, and captains of hundreds;

That all of you have conspired against me, and there is none that sheweth me that my son hath made a league with the son of Jesse, and there is none of you that is sorry for me, or sheweth unto me that my son hath stirred up my servant against me, to lie in wait, as at this day.

Then answered Doeg the Edomite, which was set over the servants of Saul, and said, I saw the son of Jesse coming to Nob, to Ahimelech the son of Ahitub.

And he enquired of the LORD for him, and gave him victuals, and gave him the sword of Goliath the Philistine.

Then

Then the king sent to call Ahimelech the priest, the son of Ahitub, and all his father's house, the priests that were in Nob. And they came all of them to the king.

And Saul said, Hear now, thou son of Ahitub. And he answered, Here I am, my lord.

And Saul said unto him, Why have ye conspired against me, thou and the son of Jesse, in that thou hast given him bread and a sword, and hast enquired of God for him, that he should rise against me, to lie in wait, as at this day?

Then Ahimelech answered the king, and said, And who is so faithful among all thy servants as David, which is the king's son-in-law, and goeth at thy bidding, and is honourable in thine house?

Did I then begin to enquire of God for him? be it far from me. Let not the king impute any thing unto his servant, nor to all the house of my father: for thy servant knew nothing of all this, less or more.

And the king said, Thou shalt surely die Ahimelech, thou, and all thy father's house.

And

And the king said unto the footmen that stood about him, Turn and slay the priests of the LORD; because their hand also is with David, and because they knew when he fled, and did not shew it me. But the servants of the king would not put forth their hand to fall upon the priests of the LORD.

And the king said to Doeg, Turn thou and fall upon the priests. And Doeg the Edomite turned and he fell upon the priests, and slew on that day fourscore and five persons that did wear a linen ephod.

And Nob, the city of the priests smote he with the edge of the sword, both men and women, children and sucklings, and oxen and asses and sheep, with the edge of the sword.

And one of the sons of Ahimelech the son of Ahitub, named Abiathar, escaped and fled after David.

And Abiathar shewed David that Saul had slain the LORD's priests.

And David said unto Abiathar, I knew it that day, when Doeg the Edomite was there, that he would surely tell Saul, I have occasioned the death of all the persons of thy father's house.

Abide

Abide thou with me, fear not: for he that seeketh my life, seeketh thy life: but with me thou shalt be in safeguard.

ANNOTATIONS AND REFLECTIONS.

It is reasonable to suppose that Saul governed in a very tyrannical manner, which occasioned some of his bravest officers to revolt from him, and join themselves to David, with a view to raise him to the throne; he was however, resolved to wait the LORD's time, and not to employ those forces against his sovereign, but only in defending himself against the inhabitants of the country he might happen to reside in. When David began to appear with his little army, the news was soon brought to Saul, who immediately encamped with royal state, and calling his soldiers together, insinuated, that Jonathan and David were confederated against him: had the charge been true, he would have deserved both pity and support; but it was founded on jealousy and falsehood, for neither his son, or David, meant to do him ill; he himself was the aggressor. Doeg was desirous of gaining the favour of the king by informing against the high-priest; but omitted to tell, that Ahimelech was induced to assist David, from a supposition that he came from Saul.

I need not enlarge on Saul's cruelty, in condemning so many innocent persons to death; nor on Doeg's wickedness, in executing the horrid sentence; but beg you will observe Saul's great *impiety*, in ordering the LORD's *priests* to be slain.

Abiathar the son of Ahimelech, was most probably with the Tabernacle, by which means he escaped the massacre. David now reflected on himself for his deceitful conduct, which had occasioned this fatal calamity; all the recompence he could make, was, to promise his protection to Abiathar. This event ought to caution every person to avoid *duplicity*, for none can possibly foresee the bad consequences it may be productive of.

The first exploit in which David employed his valiant troops, was the relief of Keilah, a city belonging to the tribe of Judah, which the Philistines, encouraged by David's disgrace, and the intestine divisions in Saul's kingdom, had besieged. David, on this occasion, shewed that he had all the noble generosity of a true hero; he longed to rescue his countrymen from their triumphant foes; but as the enterprize was important, he first enquired *the will of the LORD*, by means of Abiathar, who with the ephod had fled to him; the answer was favourable to his wishes, for "*the LORD said unto David, go and smite the Philistines, and save Keilah.*" David's men were fearful of engaging in so unequal a combat; to satisfy them therefore, he once more enquired *the will of the LORD*, and then led them on to conquest. Their victory was so compleat, that they pursued the Philistines into their own land, and seized a great number of cattle, which afforded a seasonable supply for his army; he then took up his residence in Keilah, which Saul being informed of, he resolved to besiege David there: but David had again recourse to Abiathar, to learn what the LORD required
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14 DAVID'S MODERATION.

him to do in this emergency, and was warned to depart, as the men of the city, notwithstanding the deliverance he had wrought, would betray him and his followers into the hands of Saul: David therefore hastily assembled his troops, which were increased to 600, and retired with the utmost precipitation, without resolving whither to go, but trusting them and himself entirely to the *guidance* of DIVINE PROVIDENCE. David's escape was a great disappointment to Saul, but he still resolved to destroy him if possible: David on the contrary, notwithstanding his success against the Philistines, avoided all hostilities with Saul; and instead of acting offensively against him, submitted to "*flee as a bird unto the mountains:*" the place of his retreat was in the wilderness of Ziph, in a wood; here he was favoured with a visit from his dear friend Jonathan, who came privately to him, and in the kindest and noblest manner, encouraged him to trust in God. He reminded him, that he had been anointed *captain of the LORD's inheritance*; he would certainly succeed Saul in the kingly office, and assured him, that for his own part, he should never attempt to obstruct his accession to the throne, because he would not oppose *the will of the MOST HIGH*, "*who setteth up one, and putteth down another;*" but should think it a happiness, beyond what a crown could bring, to be the first in his affection and esteem. He likewise told David that Saul was fully convinced, that the kingdom was designed by God for him, though he continued to persecute him. Jonathan and David then joined in a repetition of their former covenant, and Jonathan departed

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to his house, for he would not stay with David, lest it should appear like rebellion against his father; neither would he countenance Saul in his unjust proceedings, against a man, of whose innocence he was so perfectly convinced.

In a short time after Jonathan's kind interview with David, the Ziphites went up to Saul, and informed him of David's haunts; promising at the same time, to deliver him into his hand; he received this intelligence with the greatest courtesy, and the utmost affectation of piety; saying, "*blessed are ye of the LORD, for ye have compassion on me. Go, I pray you, prepare ye, and know and see the place where his haunt is, and who hath seen him there; for it is told me that he dealeth very subtilly. See, therefore, and take knowledge of his lurking-places, where he hideth himself; and come again to me with the certainty, and I will go with you. And it shall come to pass, if he be in the land, I will search him out throughout all the thousands of Judah.*" The Ziphites, it is supposed, executed Saul's commission; for he soon discovered the place of David's concealment, and pursued him. David being resolved to avoid a contest with his sovereign, took flight; but would most likely have fallen into the hands of Saul, had not the king been hastily called away to oppose the Philistines; this was a most providential deliverance to David, who departed, and took up his retreat in the strong holds of En-gedi. On this occasion, the following * psalm is supposed to have been penn'd.

* Chandler's Life of King David.

A THANKSGIVING.

Save me, O God, by thy name, and judge me by thy strength.

Hear my prayer, O God; give ear to the words of my mouth.

For strangers are risen up against me, and oppressors seek after my soul; they have not set God before them.

Behold, God is mine helper: the LORD is with them that uphold my soul.

He shall reward evil unto mine enemies; cut them off in thy truth.

I will freely sacrifice unto thee; I will praise thy name, O LORD, for it is good.

For he hath delivered me out of all trouble: and mine eye hath seen his desire upon mine enemies.

It appears * probable, that David abode some time, in the strong holds of En-gedi, and that he employed his troops in cultivating the country; for we can hardly suppose that he suffered them to remain idle: besides, in his psalms, he frequently mentions, that “*the barren land became fruitful: the wilderness a standing water, that the LORD prepared them a table in the presence of their enemies. That he blessed them so that they multiplied exceedingly, and suffered not their cattle to decrease;*” from which may be inferred, that rural occupations filled up those spaces, which would otherwise have been wasted in idleness, and that the LORD blessed the labours of their hands. It likewise appears, that David exercised his mind in the contem-

* Delany's Life of King David.

plation of the works of nature ; and we may suppose that he instructed his followers to admire the wisdom of God, in the creation and government of the world, by those charming compositions which the HOLY SPIRIT * inspired for his own comfort, and the benefit of others.

* See in particular Psalm civ.

S E C T. IV.

DAVID IN A CAVE AT EN-GEDI SPARETH
SAUL'S LIFE—SAUL ACKNOWLEDGETH HIS
INNOCENCY, AND TAKETH AN OATH OF DA-
VID AND DEPARTETH—SAMUEL DIETH.

AND it came to pass when Saul was re-
turned from following the Philistines,
that it was told him, saying, Behold, David
is in the wilderness of En-gedi.

Then Saul took three thousand chosen
men out of all Israel, and went to seek Da-
vid and his men upon the rocks of the wild
goats.

And he came to the sheep-cotes by the
way, where was a cave; and Saul went in to
cover his feet: and David and his men re-
mained in the sides of the cave.

And the men of David said unto him, Be-
hold the day of which the LORD said unto
thee, Behold I will deliver thine enemy into
thine hand, that thou mayest do to him as it
shall seem good unto thee. Then David
arose,

arose, and cut off the skirt of Saul's robe privily.

And it came to pass afterward, that David's heart smote him, because he had cut off Saul's skirt.

And he said unto his men, The LORD forbid that I should do this thing unto my master the LORD's anointed, to stretch forth mine hand against him, seeing he is the anointed of the LORD.

So David stayed his servants with these words, and suffered them not to rise against Saul. But Saul rose up out of the cave, and went on his way.

David also arose afterward, and went out of the cave, and cried after Saul, saying, My lord the king. And when Saul looked behind him, David stooped with his face to the earth, and bowed himself.

And David said to Saul, Wherefore hearest thou men's words, saying, Behold, David seeketh thy hurt?

Behold, this day thine eyes have seen how that the LORD hath delivered thee to day into mine hand in the cave: and some bade me kill thee, but mine eye spared thee: and

I said, I will not put forth mine hand against my lord; for he is the LORD's anointed.

Moreover, my father, see, yea, see the skirt of thy robe in my hand: for in that I cut off the skirt of thy robe, and killed thee not: know thou and see, that there is neither evil nor transgression in mine hand, and I have not sinned against thee: yet thou huntest my soul to take it.

The LORD judge between me and thee; and the LORD avenge me of thee: but mine hand shall not be upon thee.

As saith the proverb of the ancients, Wickedness proceedeth from the wicked; but mine hand shall not be upon thee.

After whom is the king of Israel come out? after whom dost thou pursue? after a dead dog, after a flea.

The LORD therefore be judge, and judge between me and thee, and see, and plead my cause, and deliver me out of thine hand.

And it came to pass when David had made an end of speaking these words unto Saul, that Saul said, Is this thy voice, my son David? and Saul lift up his voice, and wept.

And

And he said to David, Thou art more righteous than I; for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil.

And thou hast shewed this day how that thou hast dealt well with me: forasmuch as when the LORD had delivered me into thine hand, thou killedst me not.

For if a man find his enemy, will he let him go well away? wherefore the LORD reward thee good for that thou hast done unto me this day.

And now behold, I know well that thou shalt surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in thine hand.

Swear now therefore unto me by the LORD, that thou wilt not cut off my seed after me, and that thou wilt not destroy my name out of my father's house.

And David sware unto Saul. And Saul went home: but David and his men gat them up unto the hold.

And Samuel died: and all the Israelites were gathered together and lamented him, and buried him in his house at Ramah. And David arose, and went down to the wilderness of Paran.

ANNOTATIONS AND REFLECTIONS.

In the * countries inhabited by the Israelites there were many large caves, partly natural, and partly enlarged by art, for the shelter of sheep from the heat of the sun. David finding that Saul was in pursuit of him, and that if he was confined to the rocks where he had taken refuge, he and his army would soon be starved; had privately entered into this cave, with some of his followers; the rest were probably dispersed in other places. Saul being wearied with the pursuit, turned into this very cave to rest, and it is probable, indulged himself with a short repose. David had now an opportunity of putting an end to his fears, and had he followed the dictates of human policy, he certainly would have complied with his friend's advice; but he was actuated by nobler principles: trust in God, and respect for his sovereign; under whose banner, he would gladly and courageously have encountered a host of Philistine foes, but he feared to lift up his hand against the Lord's *anointed*; and rather chose to endure all the miseries of persecution and exile, than advance himself to the throne, till it should please God to call him to it.

You find that he felt remorse for having even put an affront upon his king. How must Saul have been astonished, when he heard the voice of David, addressing him in terms of kindness, as his king and father; holding in his hand such a convincing proof, that he meant him no ill; but on the contrary, was resolved

* Henry's Annotations.

not to be his own avenger. This pathetic speech was irresistible; and even Saul's hard heart was for awhile softened; tears of gratitude streamed from his eyes, and his lips uttered blessings on his generous adversary, and acknowledged that David was more righteous than himself.

David, willing to give every possible proof of his integrity, took the oath which Saul required, and most religiously observed it; but as Saul had so frequently violated his solemn engagements, David did not desire an oath in return; neither did he suppose that Saul's penitence and reconciliation would be lasting; but he had ample cause to praise the LORD for his goodness, in supporting his mind under such a conflict, which had procured him the highest gratification a generous heart can know, that of returning benefits for injuries. Having * escaped this danger, and got safe out of the cave, he composed the following Psalm:

A PRAYER OF DAVID†.

Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me, for my soul trusteth in thee: yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be overpast.

I will cry unto God most High: unto God that performeth all things for me.

He shall send from heaven and save me from the reproach of him that would swallow me up; GOD shall send forth his mercy and his truth.

* Chandler's Life of King David. † Psalm lvi.

34 DEATH OF SAMUEL.

My soul is among lions, and I lie even among them that are set on fire, even the sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword.

Be thou exalted, O GOD, above the heavens: let thy glory be above all the earth.

They have prepared a net for my steps, my soul is bowed down: they have digged a pit before me, into the midst whereof they are fallen themselves.

My heart is fixed, O GOD, my heart is fixed: I will sing and give praise.

Awake up my glory, awake psaltery and harp: I myself will awake early.

I will praise thee, O LORD, among the people: I will sing unto thee among the nations.

For thy mercy is great unto the heavens, and thy truth unto the clouds.

Be thou exalted, O GOD, above the heavens: let thy glory be above all the earth.

“ Samuel * had been the judge of Israel about 40
“ years, and having ruled with so much integrity and
“ justice, no wonder that his death was universally
“ lamented. He was buried at his own house; for
“ there were no places of public sepulchre in those
“ days: sepulchres were mostly in fields and rocks.
“ He was attended by all Israel to his grave; and
“ many hundred years after, his remains were removed
“ with equal solemnity from Ramah to Constanti-
“ nople, by the Emperor Arcadius.

“ As Saul was so tyrannical, and David in obscurity,
“ the people were very ill-governed; so that they had

* Delany's Life of King David.

“ sufficient

" sufficient reason to lament the loss of this holy man,
 " who had been devoted to God from his very birth,
 " had made the service of the LORD, and the welfare
 " of his people, his business and his pleasure. An
 " enemy to avarice and ambition. Samuel had set
 " aside his own sons, as they were unworthy, and
 " elected two strangers in succession, to the supreme
 " command. So far from envying his successor, that
 " he pitied and prayed for him. It were hard to de-
 " termine, which was happiest; his life or his death.
 " He lived to the noblest purposes; the glory of God,
 " and the good of his country : and he died, full of
 " years, and universally lamented.

" Such was Samuel ! Such always was, and such al-
 " ways will be, in a good measure, the end of all
 " those, whose beginnings are laid in true religion;
 " whose duty is their delight, and whose God their
 " glory."

S E C T. V.

DAVID SENDETH TO NABAL FOR PROVISIONS—IS REFUSED—DAVID'S ANGER—ABIGAIL'S INTERPOSITION.

AND there was a man in Maon, whose possessions were in Carmel: and the man was very great, and he had three thousand sheep, and a thousand goats; and he was shearing his sheep in Carmel.

Now the name of the man was Nabal; and the name of his wife, Abigail; and she was a woman of good understanding, and of a beautiful countenance: but the man was churlish and evil in his doings; and he was of the house of Caleb.

And David heard in the wilderness, that Nabal did shear his sheep.

And David sent out ten young men, and David said unto the young men, Get you up to Carmel, and go to Nabal, and greet him in my name.

And thus shall ye say to him that liveth in prosperity; Peace be both to thee, and
peace

peace be to thine house, and peace be unto all that thou hast.

And now I have heard that thou hast shearers; now thy shepherds which were with us, we hurt them not, neither was there ought missing unto them, all the while they were in Carmel.

Ask thy young men, and they will shew thee. Wherefore let the young men find favour in thine eyes: for we come in a good day; give, I pray thee, whatsoever cometh to thine hand, unto thy servants, and to thy son David.

And when David's young men came, they spake to Nabal according to all those words in the name of David, and ceased.

And Nabal answered David's servants, and said, Who is David? and who is the son of Jesse? there be many servants now a days that break away every man from his master.

Shall I then take my bread and my water, and my flesh that I have killed for my shearers, and give it unto men whom I know not whence they be?

So David's young men turned their way, and went again, and came and told him all those sayings.

And

And David said unto his men, Gird ye on every man his sword. And they girded on every man his sword : and David also girded on his sword ; and there went up after David about four hundred men ; and two hundred abode by the stuff.

But one of the young men told Abigail Nabal's wife, saying, Behold, David sent messengers out of the wilderness to salute our master ; and he railed on them.

But the men were very good unto us, and we were not hurt, neither missed we any thing as long as we were conversant with them when we were in the fields.

They were a wall unto us both by night and day, all the while we were with them keeping the sheep.

Now therefore know and consider what thou wilt do : for evil is determined against our master, and against all his household : for he is such a son of Belial that a man cannot speak to him.

Then Abigail made haste, and took two hundred loaves, and two bottles of wine : and five sheep ready dressed, and five measures of parched corn, and an hundred clusters

ters of raisins, and two hundred cakes of figs, and laid them on asses.

And she said unto her servants, Go on before me: behold, I come after you. But she told not her husband Nabal.

And it was so, as she rode on the ass, that she came down by the covert of the hill, and behold, David and his men came down against her: and she met them.

Now David had said, Surely in vain have I kept all that this fellow hath in the wilderness, so that nothing was missed of all that pertained unto him; and he hath requited me evil for good.

So and more also do God unto the enemies of David, if I leave of all that pertain to him by the morning light one man.

And when Abigail saw David, she hastened and lighted off the ass, and fell before David on her face, and bowed herself to the ground.

And fell at his feet, and said, Upon me, my lord, upon me let this iniquity be: and let thine handmaid, I pray thee, speak in thine audience, and hear the words of thine handmaid.

Let

Let not my lord, I pray thee, regard this man of Belial, even Nabal: for as his name is, so is he: Nabal is his name, and folly is with him; but I thine handmaid saw not the young men of my lord, whom thou didst send.

Now therefore, my lord, as the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, seeing the LORD hath with-holden thee from coming to shed blood, and from avenging thyself with thine own hand: now let thine enemies, and they that seek evil to my lord, be as Nabal.

And now this blessing which thine handmaid hath brought unto my lord, let it even be given unto the young men that follow my lord.

I pray thee, forgive the trespasses of thine handmaid. For the lord will certainly make my lord a sure house: because my lord fighteth the battles of the LORD, and evil hath not been found in thee all thy days.

Yet a man is risen to pursue thee, and to seek thy soul: but the soul of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of life with the LORD thy God; and the souls of thine enemies,

mies, them shall he sling out, as out of the middle of a sling.

And it shall come to pass when the LORD shall have done to my lord according to all the good that he hath spoken concerning thee, and shall have appointed thee ruler over Israel;

That this shall be no grief unto thee, nor offence of heart unto my lord, either that thou hast shed blood causeless, or that my lord hath avenged himself; but when the LORD shall have dealt well with my lord, then remember thine handmaid.

And David said to Abigail, Blessed be the LORD GOD of Israel, which sent thee this day to meet me:

And blessed be thy advice, and blessed be thou, which hast kept me this day from coming to shed blood, and from avenging myself with mine own hand.

For in very deed, as the LORD GOD of Israel liveth which hath kept me back from hurting thee, except thou hadst hastened and come to meet me, surely there had not been left unto Nabal, by the morning light, one man.

So

So David received of her hand that which she had brought him, and said unto her, Go up in peace to thine house; see, I have hearkened to thy voice: and have accepted thy person.

And Abigail came to Nabal, and behold, he held a feast in his house like the feast of a king: and Nabal's heart was merry within him, for he was very drunken: wherefore she told him nothing, less or more until the morning light.

But it came to pass in the morning, when the wine was gone out of Nabal, and his wife had told him these things, that his heart died within him, and he became as a stone.

And it came to pass about ten days after, that the LORD smote Nabal, that he died.

And when David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, Blessed be the LORD that hath pleaded the cause of my reproach from the hand of Nabal, and hath kept his servant from evil; for the LORD hath returned the wickedness of Nabal upon his own head. And David sent and communed with Abigail, to take her to him to wife.

And

And when the servants of David were come to Abigail to Carmel, they spake unto her, saying, David sent us unto thee to take thee to him to wife.

And she arose and bowed herself on her face to the earth, and said, Behold, let thine handmaid be a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my lord.

And Abigail hastened, and arose, and rode upon an ass with five damsels of her's that went after her: and she went after the messengers of David, and became his wife.

David also took Ahinoam of Jezreel; and they were also both of them his wives.

But Saul had given Michal his daughter, David's wife, to Phalti the son of Laish, which was of Gaalim,

ANNOTATIONS AND REFLECTIONS.

Happy was it for David, as well as for the men in Nabal's family, that Abigail went forth to meet him: the means she made use of to appease him, shew that she was a very prudent woman; she certainly was persuaded that the LORD had appointed David to rule over Israel, and that he was on this account, as well as
for

for his personal merit, entitled to respect. There was an absolute necessity for her imputing Nabal's churlishness to his *folly*, in order to save his life, as no other excuse could be offered for him; besides, we must consider that she had great reason to blame her husband for the danger to which he had exposed his family: with the most powerful arguments from honour and religion, she endeavoured to keep him from shedding blood, and entreated him to regard *her* as the offender, imploring his pardon, which she thought he had too much generosity and compassion to refuse. This polite and elegant address composed his rage, and he now thought with horror on the deed he intended to have perpetrated: from the manner in which David expressed his thankfulness to God for preserving him from this sin, we may conclude he would have felt great contrition if he had committed it: let us not therefore hastily accuse him of cruelty of temper; but consider his provocation. Nabal's behaviour was extremely ungrateful, insolent, and contemptuous; and the words he made use of will appear particularly aggravating, if we consider them as addressed to a valiant general at the head of his troops, one who was a king's son-in-law, and had been anointed *captain of the Lord's inheritance*. Surely then we must, instead of condemning, admire David's noble behaviour in conquering his passion as soon as he was reminded of his duty; as well as his humility in acknowledging his obligation to Abigail, whom he *immediately dismissed*, that she might relieve the fears of her household.

From

From this story, my dear, several important lessons may be learnt. First, that it is very dangerous to proceed to *acts of revenge*, whilst we are under the influence of passion ; for those who do so, will be hurried into sins, which may embitter the remainder of their days. It likewise teaches us, that a mild and gentle behaviour, will generally subdue that anger, which arises in a generous breast from a sense of injuries ; David's was of this kind, though immoderate in its degree ; and therefore he deserves not to be ranked with those *implacable* characters, who are deaf to all the pleadings of reason and humanity ; who can, like Saul, *coolly* plan the most malicious schemes, and are not to be diverted from the execution of them by any means.

From the death of Nabal we may discover, that such injustice as his is very displeasing to the LORD ; and that God will, himself, avenge the cause of the righteous. It is therefore, much the best way to leave the chastisement of ingratitude to the supreme Judge, who seeth the thoughts of every heart, and can determine what the measure of guilt is, which it is impossible short-sighted mortals should be capable of doing.

We cannot wonder, that David should admire the beauty, wisdom, and elegance of Abigail, and wish to have such a companion, especially as he had no other way of shewing his gratitude ; but we regret to find, that he gave into the custom of the age he lived in, of having several wives.

S E C T. VI.

THE ZIPHITES DISCOVER DAVID TO SAUL—
HE COMETH AGAINST DAVID—DAVID FIND-
ING HIM ASLEEP TAKETH HIS SPEAR AND
CRUSE—SAUL ACKNOWLEDGETH HIS SIN.

AND the Ziphites came unto Saul to Gibeah, saying, Doth not David hide himself in the hill of Hachilah, which is before Jeshimon?

Then Saul arose, and went down to the wilderness of Ziph, having three thousand chosen men of Israel with him, to seek David in the wilderness of Ziph.

And Saul pitched in the hill of Hachilah, which is before Jeshimon, by the way. But David abode in the wilderness, and he saw that Saul came after him into the wilderness.

David therefore sent out spies and understood that Saul was come in very deed.

And David arose, and came to the place where Saul had pitched: and David beheld

the place where Saul lay, and Abner the son of Ner, the captain of his host. And Saul lay in the trench, and the people pitched round about him.

Then answered David and said to Ahimelech the Hittite, and to Abishai the son of Zeruiah, brother to Joab, saying, Who will go down with me to Saul to the camp? and Abishai said, I will go down with thee.

So David and Abishai came to the people by night. And behold Saul lay sleeping within the trench, and his spear stuck in the ground at his bolster; but Abner and the people lay round about him.

Then said Abishai to David, GOD hath delivered thine enemy into thine hand this day: now therefore let me smite him, I pray thee, with the spear even to the earth at once, and I will not smite him the second time.

And David said to Abishai, Destroy him not: for who can stretch forth his hand against the LORD's anointed and be guiltless?

David said furthermore, As the LORD liveth, the LORD shall smite him: or his day shall come to die; or he shall descend into battle, and perish.

The

The LORD forbid that I should stretch forth mine hand against the LORD's anointed: but I pray thee take thou now the spear that is at his bolster, and the cruse of water, and let us go.

So David took the spear, and the cruse of water from Saul's bolster; and they gat them away, and no man saw it, nor knew it, neither awaked: for they were all asleep; because a deep sleep from the LORD was fallen upon them.

Then David went over to the other side, and stood on the top of an hill, afar off: a great space being between them:

And David cried to the people, and to Abner the son of Ner, saying, Answerest thou not, Abner? then Abner answered and said, Who art thou that criest to the king?

And David said to Abner, Art not thou a valiant man? and who is like to thee in Israel? wherefore then hast thou not kept thy lord the king? for there came one of the people in to destroy the king thy lord.

This thing is not good that thou hast done. As the LORD liveth, ye are worthy to die, because ye have not kept your master the LORD's anointed. And now see where

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where the king's spear is, and the cruse of water that was at his bolster.

And Saul knew David's voice, and said, Is this thy voice, my son David? and David said, It is my voice, my lord, O king.

And he said, Wherefore doth my lord thus pursue after his servant? for what have I done? or what evil is in mine hand?

Now therefore, I pray thee, let my lord the king hear the words of his servant. If the LORD have stirred thee up against me, let him accept an offering: but if they be the children of men, cursed be they before the LORD; for they have driven me out this day from abiding in the inheritance of the LORD, saying, Go, serve other gods.

Now therefore let not my blood fall to the earth before the face of the LORD: for the king of Israel is come out to seek a flea, as when one doth hunt a partridge in the mountains.

Then said Saul, I have sinned: return, my son David: for I will no more do thee harm, because my soul was precious in thine eyes this day: behold, I have played the fool, and have erred exceedingly.

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D

And

And David answered and said, Behold the king's spear; and let one of the young men come over and fetch it.

The LORD render to every man his righteousness and his faithfulness: for the LORD delivered thee into my hand to day, but I would not stretch forth mine hand against the LORD's anointed.

And behold, as thy life was much set by this day in mine eyes, so let my life be much set by in the eyes of the LORD, and let him deliver me out of all tribulation.

Then Saul said to David, Blessed be thou, my son David: thou shalt both do great things, and also shalt still prevail. So David went on his way, and Saul returned to his place.

ANNOTATIONS AND REFLECTIONS.

When David undertook the dangerous enterprize of going into Saul's camp with only one companion, it is supposed he was prompted to it by the *Spirit* of the LORD, as in the case of his encounter with Goliath; and that he went in full confidence of divine protection; and it appears, that Saul and his attendants were kept in profound slumber, by the immediate interposi-

tion

tion of God, otherwise, as they were active warriors, some of them would have been on the watch.

David had now a fresh temptation to deliver himself from Saul's persecutions, but remained firm to his principles of loyalty, and restrained the hand of Abishai, for he had more concern for his innocence, than his safety; and as he had so lately escaped the guilt he would have incurred if he had put Nabal's family to death, he resolved in the present instance, not to be his own avenger, but gladly embraced this new opportunity of evincing his integrity. It appears that Saul and his host were soon awake after David retired from thence, and it is likely, they were convinced that the LORD had closed their eyes, and favoured David in performing that action, which placed him in so honourable a light; it was therefore in vain to oppose him; and conviction of his good intentions rushed irresistibly on the mind of Saul, with a consciousness of his own wickedness and folly; he therefore patiently listened to the remonstrances of David, and owned himself quite overcome by his kindness; promising that he would no more do him harm. David had been too often deceived by Saul to trust to his fair professions, which though they might be well meant at that time, were not likely to be lasting; he therefore returned what he had taken from him, and committed himself to the protection of God.

Saul's prediction of David's advancement is very remarkable, and shews that he did *wisely* oppose the LORD; for he *knew* that David was appointed by God to succeed him, and yet he resolved to cut him off. Had he acquiesced in the dispensation which his own

32 DAVID GOES TO ACHISH.

impious behaviour occasioned, he might have passed the remainder of his life with much greater tranquillity.

Of all the circumstances of distress which David lamented, none was so severe to him as the being excluded from the congregation of Israel; for as he was driven amongst idolaters, he and his followers were continually exposed to the temptation of worshipping false gods; at least, they were frequently eye-witnesses of those profane rites which were abominations to the LORD; and to behold divine honours paid to idols, must have given the utmost concern to those who were zealous for the true religion.

When Saul was departed, David began to concert measures for the future security of himself and his army; and notwithstanding the recent instances he had had of God's overruling providence, which preserved him from danger in the midst of Saul's camp; fear operated so violently on his mind, that without enquiring the *will of the LORD* he consulted with his friends, and in consequence of their advice, resolved to withdraw from the kingdom, and retire into the land of the Philistines; by this step he exposed himself to a variety of temptations.

It seems that some revolution had happened amongst this people, for you know that formerly there were five sovereign princes, and at this time Achish appears to have been king over all Philistia. This prince thought it would be greatly to his advantage to detach so valiant a general as David, and his brave troops from the interest of their country, especially, as the Philistines were then meditating an invasion on the

land

land of Israel, supposing that he should by this mean confirm an irreconcilable hatred between David and Saul and their adherents; so that in all probability, Achish did not act in this matter from motives of real kindness, but policy: however, he was, notwithstanding, intitled to David's assistance on all *lawful* occasions, as he treated him and his followers with great respect, and at David's request, gave him a city to dwell in. Whilst he abode there, he made some attacks upon the nations who were devoted by God to be destroyed by the Israelites, particularly the Gazarites and Geshurites, who were branches of the Amalekites; it was therefore David's duty to destroy them, as the LORD had said, "*he would have war with Amalek from generation to generation*;" so that David, as *captain of the LORD's inheritance*, was justified in putting them all to the sword. David concealed what he had done, lest Achish should suspect that he would proceed to hostilities against his people and their allies, which might occasion his being expelled from those coasts; and with an equivocation ill becoming his character, told the king of Gath, that he had fought against some of the inhabitants of Judah; which induced Achish to place entire confidence in him, from a persuasion that he was firmly attached to his interest; and knowing David's great valour, he rejoiced in such an ally. Now was David called to a severe trial, for a war broke out with Israel, and Achish (depending on his animosity to Saul, and those who had joined with him to drive David from his native country,) proposed that he should take the command of those guards which attended his royal person;

person; to * this proposal David replied, "*surely thou shalt see what thy servant can do.*"

We must not think so hardly of David, as to suppose that he really intended to fight against his own people, but that he went with Achish in hopes that some opportunity might offer of preventing an engagement; or in case it was not to be avoided, that he might at least shew his gratitude to this monarch, by giving him protection, and saving the lives of some of his people. But, my dear, you are not able to understand all the arguments that might be produced in vindication of David in the present instance: when you are older, you shall read them in the works of the learned. Happily for David, the Philistines were jealous of him, and insisted that Achish should send him back to Ziklag.

All things are known before hand to the Supreme Being, and therefore he might *permit* David to take this step, in order that he should learn, what perplexities are the consequences of mistrusting God, and placing too great reliance on human councils. Though David consented to attend Achish, we may suppose that he gladly returned to Ziklag, for he must have been greatly distressed to know how to proceed. The king dismissed him with the highest encomiums on his merit, which proves, that David had hitherto conducted himself honourably. During his short absence, a dreadful event happened: for some of the Amalekites that remained, invaded and set fire to the city, and carried all the inhabitants, which consisted chiefly of women and

* See Chandler's Life of David.

children,

children, into captivity. This was a most afflicting stroke to David, and was perhaps intended to punish him for exposing himself to the necessity of appearing willing to engage in a bad cause; for had he and his followers gone with Achish to the camp, their families and all their property would have been inevitably lost. David's soldiers were so enraged, that they were going to stone him; but he implored the assistance of the Lord, and calling to Abiathar to fetch the ephod, had the happiness of receiving command to pursue the Amalakites, with the promise of victory. David therefore, with his army, set out on the pursuit, and found the enemy revelling and feasting in the midst of their camp; so David smote them, and gained a complete conquest, restoring the captives to liberty, and recovering all their goods, with the addition of much spoil, part of which consisted of a great number of flocks and herds; these the army gratefully allotted to David for his own share. Two hundred soldiers had been obliged to stop by the way, for they were so overcome with faintness and fatigue, that they had not power to proceed; those who had taken an active part in the battle, refused to grant them any share of the prey; but David, agreeably to the rules of justice, insisted that they should have their share, as they were *willing* to have gone, though not *able*, and had been useful in guarding the baggage.

When David came back to Ziklag he disposed of his own portion, by sending presents to all those from whom he had formerly received favours, whilst he was driven from place to place; which proves that he had a very munificent mind.

S E C T. VII.

SAUL AND HIS ARMY PREPARE FOR THE BATTLE—HIS COURAGE FALLETH HIM—HE CONSULTETH A WITCH AT ENDOR—SAMUEL APPEARETH TO HIM.

NOW Samuel was dead, and all Israel had lamented him, and buried him in Ramah, even in his own city: and Saul had put away those that had familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land.

And the Philistines gathered themselves together, and came and pitched in Shunem: and Saul gathered all Israel together, and they pitched in Gilboa.

And when Saul saw the host of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart greatly trembled.

And when Saul enquired of the LORD, the LORD answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets.

Then said Saul unto his servants, Seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that

that I may go to her and enquire of her. And his servants said to him, Behold, there is a woman that hath a familiar spirit at Endor.

And Saul disguised himself, and put on other raiment, and he went, and two men with him, and they came to the woman by night. And he said, I pray thee, divine unto me by the familiar spirit, and bring me him up whom I shall name unto thee.

And the woman said unto him, Behold, thou knowest what Saul hath done, how he hath cut off those that have familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land: wherefore then layest thou a snare for my life, to cause me to die?

And Saul sware to her by the LORD, saying, As the LORD liveth, there shall no punishment happen to thee for this thing.

Then said the woman, Whom shall I bring up unto thee? and he said, Bring me up Samuel.

And when the woman saw Samuel, she cried with a loud voice: and the woman spake to Saul, saying, Why hast thou deceived me? for thou art Saul.

And the king said unto her, Be not afraid: for what sawest thou? and the woman said unto Saul, I saw gods ascending out of the earth.

And he said unto her, What form is he of? and she said, An old man cometh up; and he is covered with a mantle. And Saul perceived that it was Samuel, and he stooped with his face to the ground, and bowed himself.

And Samuel said to Saul, Why hast thou disquieted me, to bring me up? and Saul answered, I am sore distressed: for the Philistines make war against me, and God is departed from me, and answereth me no more, neither by prophets, nor by dreams: therefore I have called thee, that thou mayest make known unto me what I shall do.

Then said Samuel, Wherefore then dost thou ask of me, seeing the LORD is departed from thee, and is become thine enemy?

And the LORD hath done to him, as he spake by me: for the LORD hath rent the kingdom out of thine hand, and given it to thy neighbour, even to David.

Because thou obeyedst not the voice of the LORD, nor executedst his fierce wrath upon Amalek,

Amalek, therefore hath the LORD done this thing unto thee this day.

Moreover, the LORD will also deliver Israel with thee into the hand of the Philistines: and to-morrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me: the LORD also shall deliver the host of Israel into the hand of the Philistines.

Then Saul fell straightway all along on the earth, and was fore afraid because of the words of Samuel: and there was no strength in him; for he had eaten no bread all the day nor all the night.

And the woman came unto Saul, and saw that he was fore troubled, and said unto him, Behold, thine handmaid hath obeyed thy voice, and I have put my life in my hand, and have hearkened unto thy words which thou spakest unto me.

Now therefore, I pray thee, hearken thou also unto the voice of thine handmaid, and let me set a morsel of bread before thee; and eat, that thou mayest have strength, when thou goest on thy way.

But he refused and said, I will not eat. But his servants, together with the woman, compelled him; and he hearkened unto

their voice. So he arose from the earth, and sat upon the bed.

And the woman had a fat calf in the house, and she hasted, and killed it, and took flour, and kneaded it, and did bake unleavened bread thereof.

And she brought it before Saul, and before his servants; and they did eat. Then they rose up, and went away that night.

ANNOTATIONS AND REFLECTIONS.

The terror which Saul suffered at the sight of the Philistine army was very natural to a guilty mind: had he kept to his duty he would have had no cause to tremble; for in that case he might, with the utmost confidence, have enquired the will of the LORD. “But † how could he who had murdered the priests, consult the holy oracle? And after having slighted the admonitions of Samuel, expect to be answered by prophets: neither could he hope for direction by a dream from God; for he had forfeited all the aids of the holy Spirit.” He had also by his cruel persecutions driven David away, and many brave officers, the flower of Saul’s army had with him joined the enemy, so that his situation was truly deplorable; but he was the author of his own wretchedness, and ought therefore to have humbled himself, and implored the

† Henry’s Annotations.

mercy of God ; instead of doing so, he had recourse to an expedient which he could not be ignorant was an unlawful one ; for he had in the beginning of his reign, from a full conviction that diabolical arts were abominable to the LORD, destroyed all those who were known to practise them.

Saul had lived in a continued course of presumptuous sin ; and I am sure, my dear, from what you have read, you will readily allow that he deserved to be rejected of God, who had shewn so much forbearance towards him. His disobedience in respect to Agag and the Amalekites, made him *unfit* to be any longer "*captain of the LORD's inheritance* ;" and therefore David had been anointed in his stead, and the promise of the kingdom was at the same time given him, for the LORD knew that Saul would not repent : but David was not permitted to *dethrone* Saul, who might have enjoyed a peaceable reign by his assistance, had he humbly submitted to the just punishment that was inflicted on him (as Moses did to his disappointment in respect to the land of Canaan, and Eli to the preference given to Samuel.) But when Saul learnt that another was preferred before him, and perceived that the Spirit of the LORD was on David, from which he concluded him to be the man, he resolved to oppose the purposes of God, by putting David to death. His cruel designs proved ineffectual, and finding himself and kingdom in the most imminent danger, his spirits sunk to the depth of despair ; he was solicitous to know what would really be the event of the battle, therefore made use of the usual *ceremonies* for learning *the will of the LORD* ; but as his heart was not right towards God, they

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they were to no purpose. He now lamented the loss of Samuel, and formed a desperate resolution of trying whether he could bring him from the dead by magic spells; for this purpose he went in the night to the witch of Endor.

Witches, wizards, forcerers, &c. so frequently mentioned in scripture, were persons who pretended to hold intercourse with spirits, and by their means to foretell future events: it is supposed that they made use of a number of superstitious ceremonies, in order to engage the assistance of *evil beings* in mischievous practices, and the discovery of hidden things: superstition is very credulous, and therefore, people who had more curiosity than religion, were led to suppose, from the strange words these persons uttered, that they were really possessed of supernatural knowledge, and could converse with souls in a state of separation from the body; but I hope, my dear, you will not believe that *evil spirits* can reveal, or any *human being* possibly discover, what it pleases God to conceal; that any arts can prevail to bring spirits into this world; or that *departed souls* can assume bodies when they please, and become visible to mortal sight: they are no more able to come to us, than we to go to them. The Creator of all things certainly *could* clothe the soul of Samuel with a *visible form*, in order that he might repeat and confirm the sentence he had formerly been commanded to denounce against Saul, and to assure him that it was going to be put immediately in execution; but authors * who have carefully considered the subject say, that the re-

* Chandler's Life of David, and Dr. Sharpe's Introduction to Universal History.

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lation we have of this event, will not admit of such a construction. I am not qualified, my dear, to decide this difficult question, but will tell you how they suppose it should be understood. It is their opinion, that the woman *knew* Saul (which she might well do if she had never seen him before, for he was the tallest man in the kingdom) and that she had acquired a power of speaking with *two voices*, by which she deceived the king into a belief, that he actually heard the prophet. The answer which Saul made when she demanded in Samuel's name *why he had brought him up?* And the knowledge she had in common with the rest of the Israelites, that Saul was REJECTED and David *preferred*, enabled her to make a reply which agreed with God's sentence formerly delivered by the prophet, and she might easily conjecture that Saul and his sons would fall in battle: or we may suppose with some degree of probability, that this sorcerer's might be *commanded* to utter these words, as Balaam was to prophesy in favour of Israel. However, my dear, as we cannot come to a certainty about it, let us read the story with humility of mind, and rest assured, that whether Samuel *appeared* or *not*, the whole transaction was ordered by Divine Providence, to awaken Saul to a sense of his sin, that he might spend the last hours of his life in repentance; but though we read, that when he found there was no hopes of success remaining, he threw himself on the ground in agonies of distress; we do not find, that he expressed either sorrow or contrition for the crimes that had reduced him to this miserable state, he certainly thought that Samuel had spoken to him, and therefore we are taught by his example, "*that if sinners are not*

" to

to be reformed by the revealed will of God declared by Moses and the prophets, neither will they be converted if one comes to them from the dead."

I hope, my dear, you will not be led from this account of Samuel to be fearful of GHOSTS, as no SPIRIT can appear but by the *miraculous power of God*, which the present state of religion does not require to be exerted; for this reason you may be sure, that all the foolish stories of apparitions, that are told by superstitious people, have no foundation in truth, but are the product of a weak imagination; "never * give way therefore to gloomy presages and terrors of mind, nor indulge a desire to pry into futurity; but fortify your soul against them, by securing the friendship and protection of that Being, who disposes of events and governs futurity. When you lay down to sleep, recommend yourself to his care: when you awake, give yourself up to his direction. Amidst all the evils that threaten you, look up to him for help, and doubt not but he will either avert them, or turn them to your advantage. Though you know neither the time nor manner of your death, nor what will befall you in this life, be not solicitous about it; because you may be sure, that God knows all, for he views the *whole* of our *existence*, not only what is *passed*, but what *is to come*, and will not fail to comfort and support us on all occasions."

* Spectator, vol. i. No. 7.

S E C T. VIII.

THE BATTLE OF GILBOA—SAUL'S SONS SLAIN
—SAUL AND HIS ARMOUR-BEARER KILL
THEMSELVES—THE KINDNESS OF THE MEN OF
JABESH-GILEAD.

NOW the Philistines fought against Israel; and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines, and fell down slain in mount Gilboa.

And the Philistines followed hard after Saul, and after his sons; and the Philistines slew Jonathan, and Abinadab, and Malchishua the sons of Saul.

And the battle went fore against Saul, and the archers hit him, and he was wounded of the archers.

Then said Saul to his armour-bearer, Draw thy sword, and thrust me through therewith; lest these uncircumcised come, and abuse me. But his armour-bearer would
not;

not; for he was fore afraid. So Saul took a sword, and fell upon it:

And when his armour-bearer saw that Saul was dead, he fell likewise on the sword, and died.

So Saul died, and his three sons, and all his house died together.

And when all the men of Israel that were in the valley saw that they fled, and that Saul and his sons were dead, then they forsook their cities, and fled; and the Philistines came and dwelt in them.

And it came to pass on the morrow, when the Philistines came to strip the slain, that they found Saul and his sons fallen in mount Gilboa.

And when they had stripped him, they took his head, and his armour, and sent into the land of the Philistines round about, to carry tidings unto their idols, and to the people.

And they put his armour in the house of their gods, and fastened his head in the temple of Dagon.

And when all Jabesh-gilead heard all that the Philistines had done to Saul,

They

They arose, all the valiant men, and took away the body of Saul, and the bodies of his sons, and brought them to Jabesh, and buried their bones under the oak in Jabesh, and fasted seven days.

So Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the LORD, even against the word of the LORD which he kept not, and also for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, to enquire of it:

And enquired not of the LORD: therefore he slew him, and turned the kingdom unto David the son of Jesse.

ANNOTATIONS AND REFLECTIONS.

“It * seems probable, that Saul was attacked in his camp soon after he returned from Endor; and that the Philistines might be encouraged to this attempt by some secret information of Saul's, having stolen out the evening before; for had he attacked the Philistines, the battle would have been fought at Shunem, where they were encamped.

“The practice of fighting with bows and arrows was not at that time in general use, and those amongst the Israelites who were expert at it had resorted to David; so that the Philistines who had brought

* Delany's Life of King David.

archers with them had great advantage over the Israelites, because they were not prepared for this way of fighting, and being taken by surprize their camp must have been in great confusion." Saul's sons were very valiant, and without doubt used their utmost efforts to repel the enemy, but were soon overpowered; and perceiving that their father fled, might think it vain to make farther resistance; however, they died as many heroes have done, by the hand of their foes, and brought no imputation on their courage; but Saul in his last act, shewed that cowardice, which generally accompanies a guilty conscience; for finding that his sons were dead, that the Philistines were in hot pursuit, and that he could no way escape, he resolved he would not fall *alive* into their hands: this circumstance shews, that he had not a religious mind; otherwise, let his distress have been ever so great, he would not have incurred the guilt of *self-murder*. Saul slew himself to avoid being abused by the Philistines, but could not preserve his corps from the indignities they offered to it. The men of Jabesh Gilead gratefully remembered the services he had performed for them against Nahash, which made them hazard their lives to recover the bodies of him and his sons; to which they paid all the honour they could, by burning spices over them, and fasting seven days till evening; this was a short mourning, and there does not appear to have been a general lamentation; perhaps, the disturbance of the times would not admit of it.

" If * this attack of the Philistines was encouraged by the intelligence of Saul's having stolen out of the

* Delany's Life of King David.

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SAUL'S TRANSGRESSION. 69

camp, then his applying to the witch of Endor, was the immediate cause of his destruction, and *he died for his transgression, which he committed against the LORD, even the sword of the LORD, which he kept not; and also for asking one who had a familiar spirit to enquire."*

SECT.

S E C T. IX.

AN AMALEKITE BRINGETH THE NEWS OF THE
DEATH OF SAUL AND JONATHAN TO DA-
VID—DAVID'S LAMENTATION.

NOW it came to pass after the death of Saul, when David was returned from the slaughter of the Amalekites, and David had abode two days in Ziklag :

It came even to pass on the third day, that behold, a man came out of the camp from Saul, with his clothes rent, and earth upon his head : and so it was, when he came to David, that he fell to the earth, and did obeisance.

And David said unto him, From whence comest thou ? And he said unto him, Out of the camp of Israel am I escaped.

And David said unto him, How went the matter ? I pray thee, tell me. And he answered, That the people are fled from the battle, and many of the people also are fallen

and dead, and Saul and Jonathan his son are dead also.

And David said unto the young man that told him, How knowest thou that Saul and Jonathan his son be dead?

And the young man that told him, said, as I happened by chance upon mount Gilboa, behold, Saul leaned upon his spear: and lo the chariots and horsemen followed hard after him.

And when he looked behind him, he saw me, and called unto me: and I answered, Here am I.

And he said unto me, Who art thou? And I answered him, I am an Amalekite.

He said unto me again, Stand, I pray thee, upon me, and slay me: for anguish is come upon me, because my life is yet whole in me.

So I stood upon him, and slew him, because I was sure that he could not live after that he was fallen: and I took the crown that was upon his head, and the bracelet that was on his arm, and have brought them hither unto my lord.

Then David took hold on his clothes, and rent them, and likewise all the men that were with him.

And

72 THE AMALEKITE SLAIN.

And they mourned and wept, and fasted until even, for Saul and for Jonathan his son, and for the people of the LORD, and for the house of Israel, because they were fallen by the sword.

And David said unto the young man that told him, Whence art thou? And he answered, I am the son of a stranger, an Amalekite.

And David said unto him, How wast thou not afraid to stretch forth thine hand, to destroy the LORD's anointed?

And David called one of the young men, and said, Go near and fall upon him. And he smote him that he died.

And David said unto him, Thy blood be upon thy head: for thy mouth hath testified against thee, saying, I have slain the LORD's anointed.

And David lamented with this lamentation over Saul, and over Jonathan his son,

(Also he bade them teach the children of Judah the use of the bow: behold it is written in the book of Jasher)

The beauty of Israel is slain upon the high places: how are the mighty fallen!

Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon : lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph.

Ye mountains of Gilboa, let there be no dew, neither let there be rain upon you, nor fields of offerings : for there the shield of the mighty is vilely cast away, the shield of Saul, as though he had not been anointed with oil.

From the blood of the slain, from the fat of the mighty, the bow of Jonathan turned not back, and the sword of Saul returned not empty.

Saul and Jonathan were lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their death they were not divided : they were swifter than eagles, they were stronger than lions.

Ye daughters of Israel weep over Saul, who clothed you in scarlet, with other delights, who put on ornaments of gold upon your apparel.

How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle ! O Jonathan, thou wast slain in thine high places.

I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan : very pleasant hast thou been unto

me: thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women.

How are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war perished!

ANNOTATIONS AND REFLECTIONS.

David was surprized at the sight of the man who appeared before him as the messenger of evil tidings, and eagerly enquired from whence he came. It is likely that David had already heard the event of the battle, but might not have received a certain account of the manner of Saul's and Jonathan's death; the tale which he now heard seems to have been invented with a view of obtaining a reward from David; for the scripture says, that Saul was dead before his armour-bearer killed himself. So far was David from rejoicing, that he expressed the utmost affliction, and shewed a noble resentment against the person who boasted of having slain the LORD's anointed. This man owned himself to be an Amalekite, and therefore David was fully justified in commanding him to be put to death; and gave a convincing proof, that he was zealous for public justice, in preference to private interest.

When the first violent emotions of grief for the disgraceful death of the king of Israel, and the loss of his beloved friend Jonathan were a little abated, David composed that beautiful elegy which you have just read: it is pathetic and affecting in the highest degree.

“ David's * sorrow for Saul's unhappy fate made him

* Delany's Life of David.

forget his cruelty and injustice towards him, and he considered him as a brave man, a valiant leader, a magnificent prince of God's own appointment, and the father of Jonathan, nearly allied also to himself by marriage."

David's behaviour in this instance is an excellent lesson, teaching us to avoid *personal reflections* on those that have injured us, as it is possible they may have done many praise-worthy actions; and that it is ungenerous to speak ill of the dead, because they cannot vindicate their own characters.

From the expression that "*Saul and Jonathan were lovely in their lives, and in their death they were not divided,*" we may infer, that though Jonathan on some particular occasions, felt the effects of Saul's ungovernable temper, there was in general great harmony between them.

How tender is David's lamentation for this dear friend! He had reason to say that Jonathan's love to him was *wonderful*; for surely never was there such an instance of disinterested friendship!

Does it not give you great pain my dear, to read of the death of this amiable man? *Why* it pleased God to suffer him to be cut off, we are not told, and therefore it is not right to indulge ourselves in fruitless enquiries. We should in such cases, always call to mind, that in the *present world* we must not expect to see crimes or virtues *fully recompensed*; for *here* the wicked frequently prosper, whilst good persons endure the *extremest affliction*: but we may assure ourselves, that in a *future state*, every one will receive the just reward of his actions; and there might David hope to meet

76 FRIENDSHIP OF ACHISH.

again, the dear friend whom the fate of war had separated from him.

I must not omit to mention, that the friendship of Achish towards David seems to have continued ; otherwise we may suppose, that he would have endeavoured to improve the victory he had gained over Saul, to effect the entire overthrow of Israel.

SECT.

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S E C T. X.

DAVID GOETH TO HEBRON—IS MADE KING OF
JUDAH—ISH-BOSHETH MADE KING OF IS-
RAEL—A MORTAL SKIRMISH—ASAHEL SLAIN.

NOW there came to David at Ziklag whilst he kept himself close because of Saul the son of Kish, mighty men, helpers of the war.

They were armed with bows, and could use both the right hand and the left in hurling stones, and shooting arrows out of a bow, and they were even of Saul's brethren of Benjamin.

And of the Gadites there separated themselves unto David, into the hold to the wilderness, men of might, and men of war fit for the battle, that could handle shield and buckler, whose faces were like the faces of lions, and were as swift as the roes upon the mountains.

And there fell some of Manasseh to David (when he came with the Philistines against Saul to battle, but they helped them not,

for the lords of the Philistines, upon advise-
ment, sent him away, saying, He will fall
to his master Saul, to the jeopardy of our
heads)

And they helped David against the band
of the rovers: for they were all mighty men
of valour, and were captains in the host.

For at that time day by day, there came
to David to help him, until it was a great
host, like the host of God.

And it came to pass after this, that David
enquired of the LORD, saying; Shall I go up
into any of the cities of Judah? And the
LORD said unto him, Go up. And David
said, Whither shall I go up? And he said,
unto Hebron.

So David went up thither, and his two
wives also, Ahinoam the Jezreelite, and
Abigail Nabal's wife the Carmelite.

And his men that were with him did Da-
vid bring up, every man with his household:
and they dwelt in the cities of Hebron.

And the men of Judah came, and there
they anointed David king over the house of
Judah: and they told David, saying, That
the men of Jabesh-gilead were they that
buried Saul.

And

And David sent messengers unto the men of Jabesh-gilead, and said unto them, Blessed be ye of the LORD, that ye have shewed this kindness unto your lord, even unto Saul, and have buried him.

And now the LORD shew kindness and truth unto you: and I also will requite you this kindness, because ye have done this thing.

Therefore now let your hands be strengthened, and be ye valiant: for your master Saul is dead, and also the house of Judah have anointed me king over them.

But Abner the son of Ner, captain of Saul's host, took Ish-bosheth the son of Saul, and brought him over to Mahanaim. And he made him king over all Israel, but the house of Judah followed David.

And Abner the son of Ner, and the servants of Ish-bosheth the son of Saul, went out from Mahanaim, to Gibeon.

And Jacob the son of Zeruiah, and the servants of David went out, and met together by the pool of Gibeon: and they sat down, the one on the one side of the pool, and the other on the other side of the pool.

And Abner said to Joab, Let the young men now arise, and play before us. And Joab said, Let them arise.

Then there arose and went over by number twelve of Benjamin, which pertained to Ishbosheth the son of Saul, and twelve of the servants of David.

And they caught every one his fellow by the head, and thrust his sword in his fellow's side; so they fell down together: wherefore that place was called Helkath-hazzurim, which is in Gibeon.

And there was a very fore battle that day: and Abner was beaten, and the men of Israel, before the servants of David.

And there were three sons of Zeruiah there, Joab, and Abishai, and Asahel: and Asahel was as light of foot as a wild roe.

And Asahel pursued after Abner, and in going he turned not to the right hand, nor to the left, from following Abner.

Then Abner looked behind him, and said, Art thou Asahel? And he answered, I am.

And Abner said to him, Turn thee aside to thy right hand or to thy left, and lay thee hold on one of the young men, and take thee

thee his armour. But Asahel would not turn aside from following of him.

And Abner said again to Asahel, Turn thee aside from following me: wherefore should I smite thee to the ground? how then should I hold up my face to Joab thy brother?

Howbeit he refused to turn aside: wherefore Abner with the hinder end of the spear smote him under the fifth rib, that the spear came out behind him; and he fell down there, and died in the same place: and it came to pass, that as many as came to the place where Asahel fell down and died, stood still.

Joab also and Abishai pursued after Abner: and the sun went down when they were come to the hill of Ammah, that lieth before Giah, by the way of the wilderness of Gibeon.

And the children of Benjamin gathered themselves together after Abner, and became one troop, and stood on the top of an hill.

Then Abner called to Joab, and said, Shall the sword devour for ever? knowest thou not that it will be bitterness in the lat-

ter end? how long shall it be then ere thou bid the people return from following their brethren?

And Joab said, As God liveth, unless thou hadst spoken, surely then in the morning the people had gone up every one from following his brother.

So Joab blew a trumpet, and all the people stood still, and pursued after Israel no more, neither fought they any more.

And Abner and his men walked all that night through the plain, and passed over Jordan, and went through all Bithron, and they came to Mahanaim.

And Joab returned from following Abner: and when he had gathered all the people together, there lacked of David's servants nineteen men, and Asahel.

But the servants of David had smitten of Benjamin and of Abner's men, so that three hundred and threescore men died.

And they took up Asahel, and buried him in the sepulchre of his father, which was in Bethlehem: and Joab and his men went all night, and they came to Hebron at the break of day.

A N N O-

ANNOTATIONS AND REFLECTIONS.

David had a noble army under his command, yet he did not offer to *possess himself* of the *throne*, but enquired *the will of the LORD*. Hebron * was situated in the midst of the tribe of Judah, on the top of a ridge of high mountains. It was one of the most ancient cities in the world, originally called Kirjath-Arba, the birth-place of Arba the son of Anak, from whom the gigantic race called Anakims descended: it had likewise been the residence of Abraham: it is now in the possession of the Turks, but in a very ruined state. Hebron was a very fruitful spot, and had been given to Caleb as a reward for his fidelity to God, and he assigned it to the Levites. Here David and his army could subsist with great conveniency, and it was peculiarly fitted for his reception, being the metropolis of his tribe, and the possession of those priestly families who espoused his interest, whose determination in his favour would have influence on the whole tribe. David's having been anointed by Samuel, was by this time generally known; Jacob and Moses had predicted the establishment of the sovereignty in the *tribe of JUDAH*; so that acting agreeably to divine appointment, the men of Judah were fully justified in electing David their king; and separating themselves from those tribes, who *opposed the LORD's will*, by setting up one of Saul's *rejected family*.

David took the earliest opportunity of shewing, by his kindness to the men of Jabesh Gilead, that he did

* Delany's Life of David.

84 CITY OF MAHANAIM.

not aim at the crown from a principle of ambition or enmity to Saul.

Abner was Saul's uncle, and being a person of great spirit, would not readily submit to let the sovereignty be lost from his family; neither was he willing to resign the command of the army; and having taken an active part with Saul, might likewise be fearful of David's resentment.

Mahanaim, * the place where Ish-bosheth made his first claim was on the *other side* Jordan, where it was supposed David had the least influence. Abner carried him about through the camp, and gained the tribes gradually to his interest. Gibeon had formerly been the metropolis of the Gibeonites, and after Joshua's league with them, a Levitical city. It is supposed that Saul had dispossessed the Levites and Gibeonites by *violence*, and placed some of his own tribe in their stead. At Gibeon, it is probable, that Ish-bosheth resided during the two first years of his reign, for so long David seems to have remained quiet; each in the mean time, strengthening his own interest as much as possible.

Hitherto David seems carefully to have avoided all acts of hostility, and determined not to *begin* them, waiting patiently for the divine disposal in his favour: but when he found that Abner had drawn together a number of men at Gibeon, he thought it advisable to send Joab with some forces to observe them.

One would expect from Abner's expression, "*let the young men arise and play before us,*" to hear of a combat, merely to shew how skilful they were in the science of defence; but it was a *challenge*, meant to

* Delany's Life of David.

prove who were the *better men*, and most deserving of the honour of *giving* a PRINCE to ISRAEL. You have read how desperately they fought, and of the bloody battle that ensued.

Asahel unfortunately singled out Abner, and pursued him *personally*; but his ambition to take his spoils proved fatal to himself. Abner seems to have had some view to a reconciliation with David, by his unwillingness to kill the brother of Joab.

It is most likely, that Joab and Abishai knew not of the death of Asahel when they parlyed with Abner, and agreed on a truce.

How dreadful are the effects of civil dissension, when friends and relations espousing different parties, fall by the hands of each other!

S E C T. XI.

DAVID'S POWER INCREASETH—ABNER REVOL-
ETH TO HIM—HAVING COMMUNED WITH THE
ISRAELITES, IS FEASTED BY DAVID AND DIS-
MISSED—JOAB KILLETH ABNER—DAVID
MOURNETH FOR HIM.

AND unto David were born in Hebron
six sons, Amnon, Chileab, Absalom,
Adonijah, Shephatiah, Ithream.

And it came to pass while there was war
between the house of Saul and the house of
David, that Abner made himself strong for
the house of Saul.

Then was Abner very wroth, for the
words of Ish-bosheth *had provoked him*, and
he said, Am I a dog's head, which against Ju-
dah do shew kindness this day unto the house
of Saul thy father, to his brethren, and to
his friends, and have not delivered thee into
the hands of David?

So

So do GOD to Abner, and more also, except as the LORD hath sworn to David, even so I do to him:

To translate the kingdom from the house of Saul, and to set up the throne of David over Israel and over Judah, from Dan even to Beer-sheba.

And he could not answer Abner a word again, because he feared him.

And Abner sent messengers to David on his behalf, saying, Whose is the land? saying also, Make thy league with me, and behold, my hand shall be with thee, to bring about all Israel unto thee.

And he said, Well, I will make a league with thee: but one thing I require of thee, that is, Thou shalt not see my face, except thou first bring Michal, Saul's daughter, when thou comest to see my face.

And David sent messengers to Ish-bosheth Saul's son, saying, Deliver me my wife Michal, which I espoused.

And Ish-bosheth sent, and took her from her husband, even from Phaltiel the son of Laish.

And her husband went with her along weeping behind her to Bahurim: then said
Abner

Abner unto him, Go, return. And he returned.

And Abner had communication with the elders of Israel, saying, Ye fought for David in times past to be king over you.

Now then do it; for the LORD hath spoken of David, saying, By the hand of my servant David I will save my people Israel out of the hand of the Philistines, and out of the hand of all their enemies.

And Abner also spake in the ears of Benjamin: and Abner went also to speak in the ears of David in Hebron, all that seemed good to Israel, and that seemed good to the whole house of Benjamin.

So Abner came to David to Hebron, and twenty men with him: and David made Abner, and the men that were with him, a feast.

And Abner said unto David, I will arise, and go, and will gather all Israel unto my lord the king, that they may make a league with thee, and that thou mayest reign over all that thine heart desireth. And David sent Abner away; and he went in peace.

And behold the servants of David and Joab came from pursuing a troop, and brought

brought in a great spoil with them: (but Abner was not with David in Hebron, for he had sent him away, and he was gone in peace)

When Joab and all the host that was with him, were come, they told Joab, saying, Abner the son of Ner came to the king, and he hath sent him away, and he is gone in peace.

Then Joab came to the king, and said, What hast thou done? behold, Abner came unto thee, why is it that thou hast sent him away, and he is quite gone?

Thou knowest Abner the son of Ner, that he came to decieve thee, and to know thy going out, and thy coming in, and to know all that thou doest.

And when Joab was come out from David, he sent messengers after Abner, which brought him again from the well of Sirah; but David knew it not.

And when Abner was returned to Hebron, Joab took him aside in the gate to speak with him quietly: and smote him there under the fifth rib, that he died, for the blood of Asahel his brother.

And

And afterward when David heard it, he said, I and my kingdom are guiltless before the LORD for ever, from the blood of Abner the son of Ner :

Let it rest on the head of Joab, and on all his father's house, and let there not fail from the house of Joab one that hath an issue, or that is a leper, or that leaneth on a staff, or that falleth on the sword, or that lacketh bread.

So Joab and Abishai his brother slew Abner, because he had slain their brother Asahel at Gibeon in the battle.

And David said to Joab, and to all the people that were with him, Rent your clothes, and gird you with sackcloth, and mourn before Abner. And king David himself followed the bier.

And they buried Abner in Hebron : and the king lift up his voice, and wept at the grave of Abner ; and all the people wept.

And the king lamented over Abner, and said, Died Abner as a fool dieth ?

Thy hands were not bound, nor thy feet put in fetters : as a man falleth before wicked men, so fellest thou. And all the people wept again over him.

And

And when all the people came to cause David to eat meat while it was yet day, David sware, saying, So do God to me, and more also, if I taste bread or ought else, till the sun be down.

And all the people took notice of it, and it pleased them: as whatsoever the king did, pleased all the people.

For all the people, and all Israel understood that day, that it was not of the king to slay Abner the son of Ner.

And the king said unto his servants, Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel.

And I am this day weak, though anointed king; and these men the sons of Zeruiah be too hard for me: the LORD shall reward the doer of evil according to his wickedness.

ANNOTATIONS AND REFLECTIONS.

The truce which was made between Joab and Abner, seems to have been of short continuance; but we do not find that David *himself* went forth to fight against the family of Saul, though there were frequent contests with their followers. Ish-bosheth is supposed to have been a person of mean abilities, as he did not attend his father and brethren to the field of battle; and it is imagined,

imagined, that Abner thought to rule the kingdom by dictating to Ish-bosheth; but when he found that his party declined, and David's was continually increasing, he formed a design of bringing about a revolution, which he had reason to suppose would be very agreeable to the Israelites in general; he therefore took advantage of a trifling affront which Ish-bosheth gave him, and instantly deserted his cause.

The interest of so powerful a man as Abner, was a very desirable acquisition to David; but he placed his dependance on God alone, and therefore would not enter into any league with him till Michal was restored; for certainly, Saul's having given her to another was a great indignity to David; and it is likely that he had a peculiar affection for her, as it was evident she had for him, by her having hazarded her own life to save his; and perhaps she might have intimated to him by some means or other, her *desire* to return; which he could scarcely in *honour* deny, as she was the person who had made him a *king's son-in-law*. There is an appearance of cruelty in his distressing Phaltiel; but we must consider, that he only required him to *restore*, what he had *no right to keep*, and therefore he was not a proper object of pity; and his *silent* sorrow proves, that he knew he had no reason to complain of *injustice* in David's behaviour.

Abner was received with great joy as the restorer of Michal, and messenger of good news; and David *made a treaty* with him, which he certainly had a *right* to do; for had he *declined* it, he would have acted an *unjust* part by the Israelites *in general*, and the *men of Judah in particular*, in rejecting an opportunity of uniting
those,

those, who had been *separated* by the unlawful usurpation of Ish-bosheth: many * arguments, my dear, have been written in David's defence, which at a proper age you shall peruse; but I shall not perplex you with them at present.

Joab was jealous that Abner would be preferred to himself; and having besides great enmity towards him on account of his brother Asahel, he concerted with Abishai, and they resolved to dispatch him.

Abner's fate teaches us, how uncertain are all the purposes of man; he had formed great projects, and promised great things; but behold they were all subverted, and "*he died as a fool dieth!*" Had he acted from good motives, it is likely he would have been successful; but though he knew the determination of God in respect to David's being king, he at first *opposed* him from *selfish* and *ambitious* views, and would not have *joined* him at all, if he had not been disappointed in them.

Joab's behaviour was treacherous in the greatest degree, and very unbecoming the character of a renowned warrior, "*for he shed the blood of war in peace, and in the very gate*" which was the place of judgment, and therefore he did it in *defiance* of justice. David was struck with abhorrence of the bloody deed, and lamented that the unsettled state of his kingdom prevented his taking just vengeance on the murderers: the *curse* which he imprecated on Joab, sound very harshly in the ear of a christian; but they proceeded from the king's *love for his people*, as there was cause to fear, that his suffering a *murderer* to go *unpunished* in the land of

* See Chandler's and Delany's Life of David.

Israel, which was so *peculiarly sanctified* by the DIVINE PRESENCE, might bring a *curse on the nation*, as they were commanded not to let a murderer live amongst them; therefore, David *devoutly prayed* that the LORD would *spare him and his people*, and *confine the curse* to JOAB, as he could not at that time do what the *justice of GOD* in such a case required. The pathetic lamentation which David uttered for the untimely fate of that great man Abner, drew tears from every eye, and convinced the people that he was perfectly innocent of his death.

S E C T.

S E C T. XII.

BAANAH AND RECHAB SLAY ISH-BOSHETH,
AND BRING HIS HEAD TO HEBRON—DAVID
CAUSETH THEM TO BE SLAIN, AND ISH-BO-
SHETH'S HEAD TO BE BURIED.

AND when Saul's son heard that Abner was dead in Hebron, his hands were feeble, and all the Israelites were troubled.

And Saul's son had two men that were captains of bands: the name of the one was Baanah, and the name of the other Rechab, the sons of Rimmon a Beerothite, of the children of Benjamin: (for Beeroth also was reckoned to Benjamin;

And the Beerothites fled to Gittaim, and were sojourners there until this day)

And Jonathan, Saul's son, had a son that was lame of his feet, and was five years old when the tidings came of Saul and Jonathan out of Jezreel, and his nurse took him up, and fled: and it came to pass as she made
haste

haste to flee, that he fell, and became lame ;
and his name was Mephibosheth.

And the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, Rechab and Baanah, went, and came about the heat of the day to the house of Ish-bosheth, who lay on a bed at noon ; and they smote him and slew him, and beheaded him, and took his head, and gat them away through the plain all night.

And they brought the head of Ish-bosheth unto David to Hebron, and said to the king, Behold the head of Ish-bosheth the son of Saul, thine enemy, which fought thy life ; and the LORD hath avenged my lord the king this day of Saul, and of his seed.

And David said unto them, As the LORD liveth, who hath redeemed my soul out of all adversity,

When one told me, saying, Behold Saul is dead, (thinking to have brought good tidings) I took hold of him, and slew him in Ziklag, who thought that I would have given him a reward for his tidings :

How much more, when wicked men have slain a righteous person, in his own house, upon his bed ? shall I not therefore now require

his blood of your hand, and take you away from the earth?

And David commanded his young men, and they slew them, and cut off their hands and their feet, and hanged them up over the pool in Hebron: but they took the head of Ish-bosheth, and buried it in the sepulchre of Abner, in Hebron.

ANNOTATIONS AND REFLECTIONS.

Abner's death threw Ish-bosheth and the Israelites into the utmost confusion: he had not *abilities* to defend *his own cause*, and it was in vain for *them* to *resist* the growing power of David without a leader.

The Beerothites, who murdered Ish-bosheth, certainly intended to ingratiate themselves with David, by clearing his way to the throne of Israel; but they had either forgot, or not heard of his treatment of the Amalekite who boasted of having slain Saul. It was necessary, for the vindication of his own character, that he should punish treachery.

The *Beerothites are supposed to have been Benjamites, who after the battle of Gilboa, fled to Beeroth, a city which had formerly belonged to the Gibeonites, but was evacuated by Saul's destroying them.

Ish-bosheth is mentioned by David as a *righteous person*, and so he might be in respect to Rechab and Baanah; for it does not appear that he had either done,

* Delany's Life of King David.

98 REGULATION OF THE ARMY.

or designed them any ill. But he was not the KING appointed by the LORD, and therefore David having been anointed by the command of GOD, was justified in opposing him, and taking all proper measures for recovering his own right. Ish-bosheth certainly had *no pretensions* to the throne, even supposing that he was not satisfied of David's having been chosen by the LORD; because Mephibosheth, Jonathan's son, was the *lawful heir*, if the crown had descended in *lineal succession*; and therefore he should in that case have fought for *him*, and maintained *his* claim, instead of *usurping* the *sovereign power* himself.

The *severe* sentence which David pronounced against the murderers, proves, that he was desirous to wait till it should please GOD to bring him to the throne, and that he particularly wished no *violence* might be done to *any* of Saul's family.

We are informed that David spent seven years and six months at Hebron; and as it appears that he did not take the field during that time, we may conjecture that he employed himself in *settling* and *regulating* his ARMY; for we may learn from different parts of scripture*, that he appointed twelve courses of military men for the service of the year, each consisting of 24,000 soldiers, with their proper officers included, to do military duty wherever occasion required, one month in every year. It † likewise appears, that the officers of each course, were usually the fathers of the principal families of which that course consisted, so that there was little fear of cruelty and oppression on one side, or disobedience and desertion on the other; and the commanders were

* 2 Sam. ch. xxiii.

† 1 Chron. ch. xxvii.

DAVID'S COMMANDERS. 99

naturally engaged to be more diligent in instructing and forming their soldiers, and the soldiers more attentive in learning their duty.

David † had *three* commanders in chief of the *first* order, *three* of the *second*, *thirty-one* of the *third*, and *thirty* of the *fourth*: Asahel is mentioned as *one* of the chiefs, therefore this regulation of the army must have been established before the battle of Gibeon; and as it is said that “*there was long war between the house of Saul and the house of David;*” and we read but of little bloodshed, we may presume, that though there might be frequent *skirmishes*, there was no *battle* besides that at Gibeon; and we may suppose, that during the seven years of Ish-bosheth's reign over Israel, David exercised and disciplined his troops, so that at the conclusion of it he had a noble army.

† 1 Chron. xi. and xxviii.

S E C T. XIII.

DAVID ANOINTED KING OVER ALL ISRAEL—
THE PEOPLE'S REJOICINGS ON THE OCCASION.

DAVID was thirty years old when he began to reign in Hebron, and he reigned over Judah seven years and six months.

Then came all the tribes of Israel to David unto Hebron, and spake, saying, Behold, we are thy bone and thy flesh.

Also in times past when Saul was king over us, thou wast he that leddest out and broughtest in Israel: and the LORD said to thee, Thou shalt feed my people Israel, and thou shalt be a captain over Israel.

So all the elders of Israel came to the king to Hebron, and king David made a league with them in Hebron before the LORD: and they anointed David king over Israel. David was thirty years old when he began to reign.

And

And these are the numbers of the bands that were ready armed to the war, and came to David to Hebron, to turn the kingdom of Saul to him, according to the word of the LORD.

The children of Judah that bare shield and spear, were six thousand and eight hundred ready armed to the war.

Of the children of Simeon, mighty men of valour for the war, seven thousand and one hundred.

Of the children of Levi, four thousand and six hundred.

And Jehoiada was the leader of the Aaronites, and with him were three thousand and seven hundred.

And Zadok, a young man mighty of valour, and of his father's house twenty and two captains.

And of the children of Benjamin the kindred of Saul, three thousand: for hitherto the greatest part of them had kept the ward of the house of Saul.

And of the children of Ephraim, twenty thousand and eight hundred, mighty men of valour, famous throughout the house of their fathers.

And of the half tribe of Manasseh, eighteen thousand, which were expressed by name to come and make David king.

And of the children of Issachar, which were men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do : the heads of them were two hundred, and all their brethren were at their commandment.

Of Zebulun, such as went forth to battle, expert in war with all instruments of war, fifty thousand which could keep rank ; they were not of double heart.

And of Naphtali, a thousand captains, and with them, with shield and spear, thirty and seven thousand.

And of the Danites expert in war, twenty and eight thousand and six hundred.

And of Asher such as went forth to battle, expert in war, forty thousand.

And on the other side of Jordan, of the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and of the half tribe of Manasseh, with all manner of instruments of war for the battle, an hundred and twenty thousand.

All these men of war that could keep rank came with a perfect heart to Hebron, to make David king over all Israel : and all the

rest also of Israel were of one heart to make David king.

And there they were with David three days, eating and drinking: for their brethren had prepared for them.

Moreover, they that were nigh them, even unto Issachar, and Zebulun, and Naphtali, brought bread on asses, and on camels, and on mules, and on oxen, and meat, meal, cakes of figs, and bunches of raisins, and wine, and oil, and oxen, and sheep, abundantly: for there was joy in Israel.

ANNOTATIONS AND REFLECTIONS.

The people of Israel without a king and leader, were like sheep having no shepherd; and as they were convinced by David's mild and wise government over Judah, that he was deserving the supreme authority, they were unanimous in chusing him for their sovereign. How highly delightful must it have been to David, to receive the *willing* homage of such multitudes, who at length acknowledged that he was *the chosen of the LORD*, and worthy to govern them!

The *covenant* which David entered into, is supposed to have been a solemn promise in the name of the LORD, that he would administer justice, and govern agreeably to the *law of God*, given to Moses; and the people

bound themselves in the same solemn manner, to obey him as that law required.

Instead of strife and contention, nothing was heard in Israel but joyful acclamations. Now were those friends reconciled, whom civil discord had set at variance; and all the blessings of unanimity presented themselves to the mind. Mirth and festivity filled up the happy hours, and warlike instruments were exchanged for the merry harp and the lute; every countenance was enlivened with gladness, and every tongue invoked blessings on David. "Yet † amidst all this rejoicing, there was no luxury or intemperance: nothing but the produce of the earth in its native simplicity; and as David presided, we may reasonably suppose, that the feast began and ended with praises and thanksgivings to the LORD."

Are you not happy, my dear, to find, that David, after all his troubles, was invited to the throne of Israel in so honourable a manner? He certainly had resisted many temptations to gain possession of it by violence, for he was firmly persuaded that the *promises* of God were *sure*, and the *aid* of the LORD *sufficient*.

† Delany's Life of David.

SECT.

S E C T. XIV.

DAVID TAKETH ZION—MAKETH ALLIANCE
WITH HIRAM KING OF TYRE.

AND the king and his men went to Jerusalem, unto the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land: which spake unto David, saying, Except thou take away the blind and the lame, thou shalt not come in hither: thinking David cannot come in hither.

Nevertheless David took the strong hold of Zion: the same is the city of David.

And David said on that day, Whosoever getteth up to the gutter, and smiteth the Jebusites, and the lame and the blind, that are hated of David's soul, he shall be chief and captain: wherefore they said, the blind and the lame shall not come into the house.

So David dwelt in the fort, and called it the city of David; and David built round about, from Millo and inward.

And David went on, and grew great, and the LORD GOD of hosts was with him.

And Hiram king of Tyre, sent messengers to David, and cedar-trees, and carpenters, and masons : and they built David an house.

And David perceived that the LORD had established him king over Israel, and that he had exalted his kingdom for his people Israel's sake.

ANNOTATIONS AND REFLECTIONS.

When * the Israelites in the days of Joshua *cast lots* for their *future* inheritance, Sion fell to Benjamin : soon after Joshua's death the tribe of Judah took the *lower* city, but the Jebusites still maintained the *fortress* : after the city was *rebuilt*, the children of Judah and Benjamin inhabited it ; but they very imprudently suffered the Jebusites to dwell amongst them. In Saul's time, however, the Hebrews dwelt in it (for David carried Goliath's head thither) ; but it is supposed, that the Jebusites took entire possession of it after the battle of Gilboa. So you find, my dear, that the Israelites had an *undoubted right* to SION by the appointment of God ; and a man of David's courage and enterprising spirit, would scarcely suffer so strong a fortress to remain in the hands of one of those people who were devoted by God to destruction : his claim to it was just,

* Chandler's Life of King David.

and the taking of it, necessary to the security and peace of his government and people. The Jebusites supposing it *impregnable*, treated David with the utmost scorn and contempt, saying, that even the *blind* and the *lame* amongst them, were able to defend it against *his utmost force*; and it is thought, that in *derision*, they placed such *impotent persons* on their *ramparts*, (instead of *able soldiers*) who perhaps joined in deriding David, and blaspheming the ALMIGHTY GOD, in whom Israel confided. If they were guilty of this sin, they were *deservedly hated by David's soul*; and the punishment he inflicted, was the *just reward* of their *presumption*. I hope, my dear, you do not think so meanly of David, as to suppose, that he would *inhumanly hate* people on account of *natural infirmities*.

It is conjectured, that after this important victory, David composed the following psalm * :

Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truths sake.

Wherefore should the heathen say, Where is now their God?

But our GOD is in the heavens, he hath done whatsoever he pleased.

Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands.

They have mouths, but they speak not; eyes have they, but they see not.

They have ears, but they hear not; noses have they, but they smell not.

They have hands, but they handle not; feet have they, but they walk not: neither speak they through their throat.

* Psalm cxv. Delany's Life of King David.

They that make them, are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them.

O Israel, trust thou in the LORD: he is their help and their shield.

O house of Aaron, trust in the LORD: he is their help and their shield.

Ye that fear the LORD, trust in the LORD: he is their help and their shield.

The LORD hath been mindful of us, he will bless us, he will bless the house of Israel, he will bless the house of Aaron.

He will bless them that fear the LORD, both small and great.

The LORD shall increase you more and more, you and your children.

You are blessed of the LORD, which made heaven and earth.

The heaven, even the heavens are the LORD's: but the earth hath he given to the children of men.

The dead praise not the LORD, neither any that go down into silence.

But we will bless the LORD, from this time forth and for evermore. Praise the LORD.

By this psalm you may see, my dear, the sense which David entertained of God's mercies; and that he imputed his success to the power of the ALMIGHTY.

When David had possess'd himself of the strong fortrefs of Sion, he fixed his residence there, and made it his capital after he had improved and enlarged it as far as the present state of affairs required: his next care was to adorn it, in which the friendship of HIRAM, KING OF TYRE, was very serviceable.

This

This * prince appears to have been of a magnificent and generous temper, and a believer in the true God, notwithstanding history informs us that he built temples in honour of those idols which the Phœnicians worshipped; perhaps he was converted by David †. Tyre was a city in Phœnicia, lately raised to great wealth, and become a royal city. It abounded with cedar-trees, and with men of experience in the arts of building, which the Israelites were at that time unskilled in, as they were used to little besides war and agriculture. I shall, at a future time, give you a farther account of Tyre.

According to ancient authors, Jerusalem was, in the time of David, a very magnificent city; § in the centre of it, on the summit of mount Sion, was David's palace: when the building of this was compleated, and he was going to dwell in it, he is supposed to have penned the following psalm:

A PSALM AT THE DEDICATION OF THE HOUSE OF DAVID, EXPRESSIVE OF HIS GRATITUDE TO THE LORD ||.

I will extol thee, O LORD, for thou hast lifted me up, and hast not made my foes to rejoice over me.

O LORD my GOD, I cried unto thee, and thou hast healed me.

O LORD, thou hast brought up my soul from the grave: thou hast kept me alive that I should not go down to the pit.

* See Universal History. † 1 Kings, v. 7. § Chandler's Life of David. || Psalm xxx.

Sing

110 DAVID'S RESOLUTIONS.

Sing unto the LORD, O ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.

For his anger endureth but a moment; in his favour is life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.

And in my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved.

LORD, by thy favour thou hast made my mountain to stand strong: thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled.

I cried unto thee, O LORD: and unto the LORD I made supplication.

What profit is there in my blood, when I go down to the pit? shall the dust praise thee? shall it declare thy truth?

Hear, O LORD, and have mercy upon me: LORD, be thou my helper.

Thou hast turned from me my mourning into dancing: thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness:

To the end that my glory may sing praise to thee, and not be silent: O LORD my God, I will give thanks unto thee for ever.

A PSALM BY WHICH DAVID DECLARED HIS RESOLUTION TO OBSERVE THE UTMOST INTEGRITY IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE*.

I will sing of mercy and judgment: unto thee, O LORD, will I sing.

I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way; O when wilt thou come unto me: I will walk within my house with a perfect heart.

* Psalm ci.

DAVID'S RESOLUTIONS. 111

I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes : I hate the work of them that turn aside, it shall not cleave to me.

A froward heart shall depart from me : I will not know a wicked person.

Who so privily slandereth his neighbour, him will I cut off : him that hath an high look, and a proud heart, will not I suffer.

Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me : he that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve me.

He that worketh deceit, shall not dwell within my house : he that telleth lies, shall not tarry in my sight.

I will early destroy all the wicked of the land : that I may cut off all wicked doers from the city of the LORD.

SECT.

S E C T. XV.

DAVID SMITETH THE PHILISTINES AT BAAL-PERAZIM.

BUT when the Philistines heard that they had anointed David king over Israel, all the Philistines came up to seek David; and David heard of it, and went down to the hold.

The Philistines also came and spread themselves in the valley of Rephaim.

And David enquired of the LORD, saying, Shall I go up to the Philistines? wilt thou deliver them into mine hand? and the LORD said unto David, Go up: for I will doubtless deliver the Philistines into thine hand.

And David came to Baal-perazim, and David smote them there, and said, The LORD hath broken forth upon mine enemies before me, as the breach of waters. Therefore he called the name of that place Baal-perazim.

And

And there they left their images, and David and his men burnt them.

Now three of the thirty captains went down to the rock to David, into the cave of Adullam, and the host of the Philistines encamped in the valley of Rephaim.

And David was then in the hold, and the Philistines garrison was then at Beth-lehem.

And David longed, and said, Oh, that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Beth-lehem that is at the gate !

And the three brake through the host of the Philistines, and drew water out of the well of Beth-lehem that was by the gate, and took it and brought it to David ; but David would not drink of it, but poured it out to the LORD.

And said, My GOD forbid it me, that I should do this thing : shall I drink the blood of these men that have put their lives in jeopardy ? for with the jeopardy of their lives they brought it. Therefore he would not drink it.

ANNO.

ANNOTATIONS AND REFLECTIONS.

Whilst the Israelites were divided amongst themselves, they were disregarded by the neighbouring nations; but, when David was seated on the throne of Israel, and had built and fortified the royal city, after destroying the Jebusites it is reasonable to suppose, that they all took the alarm, and confederated together with the Philistines, in order to crush his growing power; so that David might well say, “ *all nations compassed him about.*”

The valley of Rephaim was to the west of Jerusalem, large and fruitful, capable of containing the numerous hosts, which, collected together, must have made a very formidable appearance. David retired to the cave of Adullam because he was acquainted with its strength, and did not chuse to make Jerusalem a scene of blood, if he could by any means prevent its invasion.

Though David had a very powerful army, commanded by heroes of renowned valour, he knew that no *human means* were sufficient to secure him success against his enemies; therefore, according to his usual piety, and consistent with his character as *GOD’S vicegerent*, and *CAPTAIN of the LORD’S inheritance*, he would not presume to attack the Philistines till he had enquired the *will of GOD*. When he was, in consequence of the *divine command*, going to encounter the enemy, he is supposed to have animated his troops by repeating the following * psalm, which perhaps was accompanied with warlike musick.

* Delany’s Life of David.

A PSALM

DAVID'S INTERCESSION. 115

A PSALM OF DAVID TO IMPLORE THE AID OF
GOD AGAINST THE IDOLATROUS NATIONS*.

*Keep not thou silence, O GOD : hold not thy peace, and
be not still, O GOD.*

*For lo, thine enemies make a tumult : and they that
hate thee, lift up the head.*

*They have taken crafty counsel against thy people, and
consulted against thy hidden ones.*

*They have said, Come, and let us cut them off from being
a nation ; that the name of Israel may be no more in re-
membrance.*

*For they have consulted together with one consent : they
are confederate against thee.*

*The tabernacles of Edom and the Ishmaelites : of Moab,
and the Hagarenes,*

*Gebal, and Ammon, and Amalek, the Philistines with
the inhabitants of Tyre.*

*Assur is also joined with them : they have holpen the
children of Lot.*

*Do unto them as unto the Midianites, as to Sisera, as to
Jabin, at the brook of Kison :*

*Which perished at En-dor : they became as dung for the
earth.*

*Make their nobles like Oreb, and like Zeeb : yea, all
their princes as Zeba and as Zalmunna :*

*Who said, let us take to ourselves the houses of GOD in
possession.*

*O my GOD, make them like a wheel ; as the stubble be-
fore the wind.*

*As the fire burneth the wood, and as the flame setteth
the mountains on fire ;*

* Psalm lxxxiii.

116 DAVID'S ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.

So persecute them with thy tempest, and make them afraid with thy storm.

Fill their faces with shame: that they may seek thy name, O LORD.

Let them be confounded and troubled for ever: yea, let them be put to shame and perish:

That men may know, that thou whose name alone is JEHOVAH, art the most High over all the earth.

David, you read, gained a great victory; but he considered himself only as an humble instrument in the hand of God, for he describes the enemy as an *overwhelming flood* ready to swallow him up; and the armies of his enemies, divided by the power of God, as the mighty waters of the ocean are broken and divided by a storm. On this happy occasion, he is supposed to have uttered the following psalm:

A PSALM OF DAVID, ACKNOWLEDGING THE MERCY AND GOODNESS OF THE LORD IN GIVING HIM VICTORY OVER THE ENEMIES OF ISRAEL*.

If it had not been the LORD who was on our side, now may Israel say:

If it had not been the LORD who was on our side, when men rose up against us:

Then they had swallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled against us.

Then the waters had overwhelmed us, the stream had gone over our soul.

* Psalm cxxiv.

DAVID'S SELF-DENIAL. 117

Then the proud waters had gone over our soul.

*Blessed be the LORD, who hath not given us as a prey
to their teeth.*

*Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the
fowlers; the snare is broken, and we are escaped.*

*Our help is in the name of the LORD, who made heaven
and earth.*

Are you not charmed with the affectionate respect of
those, who fetched the water from Bethlehem, and with
David's piety and noble self-denial? He looked upon
it as sacred to GOD, and poured it on the earth as an
offering of thanksgiving, though he was suffering the
pain of excessive thirst.

SECT.

S E C T. XVI.

DAVID SMITETH THE PHILISTINES AGAIN AT
THE MULBERRY-TREES.

AND the Philistines came up yet again,
and spread themselves in the valley of
Rephaim.

And when David enquired of the LORD,
he said, Thou shalt not go up: but fetch a
compass behind them and come upon them
over against the mulberry-trees.

And let it be when thou hearest the sound
of a going in the tops of the mulberry-trees,
that then thou shalt bestir thyself: for then
shall the LORD go out before thee, to smite
the host of the Philistines.

And David did so, as the LORD had com-
manded him; and smote the Philistines from
Geba, until thou come to Gazer.

ANNO.

PUBLICK THANKSGIVING. 119

ANNOTATIONS AND REFLECTIONS.

Though the Philistines and their allies had received such an overthrow, they made another attempt, in which they were miraculously defeated; for a noise was heard by them like the sound of a mighty army in their rear, which struck them with terror, so that David totally defeated them. When David and his victorious army returned back to Jerusalem, it * is supposed the following psalm was publicly sung:

PART OF A PUBLIC THANKSGIVING, WHICH IS SUPPOSED TO HAVE BEEN OFFERED UP BY KING DAVID AND HIS PEOPLE, WHEN HE AND HIS ARMY RETURNED TO JERUSALEM†.

O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: because his mercy endureth for ever.

Let Israel now say, that his mercy endureth for ever.

Let the house of Aaron now say, that his mercy endureth for ever.

Let them now that fear the LORD say, that his mercy endureth for ever.

The LORD is on my side: I will not fear what man can do unto me.

It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man.

It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in princes.

* Delany's Life of David. † Psalm cxviii.

120 PUBLICK THANKSGIVING.

All nations compassed me about : but in the name of the LORD will I destroy them.

They compassed me about like bees ; they are quenched as the fire of thorns : for in the name of the LORD I will destroy them.

Thou hast thrust sore at me that I might fall : but the LORD helped me.

The LORD is my strength and song, and is become my salvation.

The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous : the right hand of the LORD doeth valiantly.

The right hand of the LORD is exalted : the right hand of the LORD doeth valiantly.

Open to me the gates of righteousness : I will go into them, and I will praise the LORD.

This gate of the LORD, into which the righteous shall enter.

I will praise thee : for thou hast heard me, and art become my salvation.

The stone which the builders refused, is become the head-stone of the corner.

This is the LORD's doing, it is marvellous in our eyes.

This is the day which the LORD hath made, we will rejoice and be glad in it.

Save now, I beseech thee, O LORD : O LORD, I beseech thee, send now prosperity.

Thou art my GOD, and I will praise thee ; thou art my GOD, I will exalt thee.

O give thanks unto the LORD, for he is good : for his mercy endureth for ever.

SECT.

S E C T. XVII.

DAVID FETCHETH THE ARK FROM KIRJATH-JEARIM WITH GREAT REJOICINGS—UZZA STRUCK DEAD FOR TOUCHING IT—IT IS CARRIED TO THE HOUSE OF OBED-EDOM.

AND David consulted with the captains of thousands and hundreds, and with every leader.

And David said unto all the congregation of Israel, If it seem good unto you, and that it be of the LORD our GOD, let us send abroad unto our brethren every where that are left in all the land of Israel, and with them also to the priests and Levites which are in their cities and suburbs, that they may gather themselves unto us.

And let us bring again the ark of our GOD to us: for we enquired not at it in the days of Saul.

And all the congregation said, that they would do so: for the thing was right in the eyes of all the people.

So David gathered all Israel together, from Shihor of Egypt even unto the entering of Hemath, to bring the ark of God from Kirjath-jearim.

And David went up, and all Israel, to Baalah, that is to Kirjath-jearim, which belongeth to Judah, to bring up thence the ark of God the LORD that dwelleth between the cherubims, whose name is called on it.

And they carried the ark of God in a new cart, out of the house of Abinadab. And Uzza and Ahio drave the cart.

And David and all Israel played before God with all their might, and with singing, and with harps, and with psalteries, and with timbrels, and with cymbals, and with trumpets.

And when they came unto the threshing-floor of Chidon, Uzza put forth his hand to hold the ark: for the oxen stumbled.

And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzza, and he smote him, because he put forth his hand to the ark: and there he died before God.

And David was displeased because the LORD had made a breach upon Uzza, wherefore

fore that place is called Perez-uzza to this day.

And David was afraid of God that day, saying, How shall I bring the ark of God home to me?

So David brought not the ark home to himself to the city of David, but carried it aside to the house of Obed-edom the Gittite.

And the ark of God remained with the family of Obed-edom in his house three months. And the LORD blessed the house of Obed-edom, and all that he had.

ANNOTATIONS AND REFLECTIONS.

It is likely that David recovered from the Philistines all that they had gained at the battle of Gilboa, and drove them out of the cities they had seized at the death of Saul*; and being now fixed at Jerusalem, he was resolved to do every thing in his power to increase its safety and magnificence: for this purpose, he thought it particularly necessary to secure the PRESENCE and protection of the GOD of *Israel*.

You may remember, my dear, with what solemnity this ark had been deposited in the tabernacle by Moses, and that the *glorious cloud* which appeared as a *manifestation of the DIVINE PRESENCE*, rested on the

* Chandler's Life of David.

124 THE ARK REMOVED.

MERCY-SEAT *above the cherubims.* A veil you know, was placed before the Ark, and Aaron and his sons ministered there, and offered incense on the golden altar; and the people assembled in the court of the tabernacle to offer their burnt-offerings, to join in celebrating the praises of the LORD, and to make supplications to him, and perform their vows; which was called, *appearing before the LORD.* Wherever the Ark was deposited, to that place the tribes were ordered to repair three times a year to keep the passover, &c. therefore the *public worship of God* could not have been properly performed at Jerusalem, neither could that city have been the *metropolis of the kingdom*, without the Ark, which made David very desirous to bring it thither.

Hitherto the Ark had had no settled habitation; for many years it had been carried about from place to place; and in the time of Eli, God, to punish the Israelites for their impiety, had permitted it to fall into the hands of the Philistines; and when the calamities the Philistines suffered for detaining it obliged them to send it back into the land of Israel, it was left in the house of Abinadab, and here it had remained about forty-six years, till David's establishment on the throne; excepting on some particular occasions, when it was carried into the field of battle.

David's proposal to bring the ark to Jerusalem, met with the joyful concurrence of his people, and was put immediately in execution. The * procession must have been uncommonly grand, as it consisted of all the nobility, the priests and Levites, and the officers of the

* Delany's Life of David.

army with the ensigns and ornaments of their different orders, led on by their sovereign, and followed by an innumerable multitude of people belonging to the different tribes of Israel. During the procession, David and all those who were skilful in music, expressed their joy by playing on various instruments; but their transports were soon interrupted by a dreadful visitation on Uzza, one of the sons of Abinadab, who drove the cart. It is said "THAT GOD *smote him for his error.*" It was a great crime in Uzza to be ignorant of any thing respecting the ARK; for the law of Moses expressly taught, that no one but the priests should touch it; and therefore he should have fully instructed himself concerning the *requisite ceremonies*, before he *presumed* to attend it; especially on so solemn an occasion, when the king and people were assembled to do it honour: and as the LORD was about to restore *his holy worship*, it was necessary that the congregation should be taught to *reverence his divine ordinances*. The religion of the Jews, as I have told you before, consisted of a variety of *ceremonials*, which were the *pledges* of their COVENANT concerning the land of Canaan, if they omitted them they forfeited their *privileges*; and as the DIVINE BEING had *sanctified* the ARK in so visible a manner by a token of his immediate PRESENCE, it was certainly *sacred*, and ought to have been attended with the utmost reverence: nothing less than a *judgment from heaven* upon a *profanation* of it, could recover the people to a proper sense of the respect due to that sacred repository of the commands of God.

126 DAVID'S DISPLEASURE.

It is said that “*David was displeased* ;” but from the piety of his disposition we may suppose, that he was only *disappointed and grieved* that his holy purposes were interrupted, and fear took possession of his mind, lest *he should*, through *ignorance*, commit offence likewise.

It may seem strange, that David should not be fully acquainted with the law of Moses ; but we must consider the times he lived in ; the Ark had been greatly neglected for many years ; religion was but little attended to in the days of Saul, for the bad example of the sovereign and his court is too apt to influence a nation : all the priests who had ever seen the Ark were dead, excepting one young man, who had never seen it removed ; neither were there any Levites alive, who had been present at that solemnity. David and his people had been constantly engaged in war ; and though his mind was naturally inclined to piety, he had not much opportunity of attending *public worship*, according to the original establishment.

The signal vengeance of God on Uzza, struck David with the utmost consternation ; and he would not venture to advance any farther with the ark at that time : Obed-edom, at whose house he left it, was a Levite, and a pious good man : he rejoiced to receive it, knowing it would prove a blessing to him and his family, as he well understood the nature of Uzza's offence.

Tho' Christians cannot be guilty of the very crime for which Uzza received such an exemplary punishment, every one who *wilfully* neglects to make use of
the

the means with which it has pleased God to bless us, for learning our duty, is certainly liable to the divine displeasure. Let us therefore study with unremitting diligence, the HOLY SCRIPTURES, lest, for want of *knowing* them, we fall into *sin*, and be like Uzza, cut off for our ERROR.

S E C T. XVIII.

DAVID ORDERETH THE PRIESTS AND LEVITES
TO CARRY THE ARK TO JERUSALEM—HE
ATTENDETH IT WITH GREAT JOY.

AND David made him houses in the city of David, and prepared a place for the ark of God, and pitched for it a tent.

Then David said, None ought to carry the ark of God, but the Levites: for them hath the LORD chosen to carry the ark of God, and to minister unto him for ever.

And David gathered all Israel together to Jerusalem, to bring up the ark of the LORD unto his place which he had prepared for it.

And David assembled the children of Aaron, and the Levites, in all eight hundred and sixty two.

And David called for Zadok and Abiathar the priests, and for the Levites, for Uriel, Afaiah, and Joel, Shemaiah, and Eliel, and Amminadab.

And said unto them, Ye are the chief of the fathers of the Levites, sanctify yourselves
both

both ye and your brethren, that ye may bring up the ark of the LORD GOD of Israel unto the place that I have prepared for it.

For because ye did it not at the first, the LORD our GOD made a breach upon us, for that we sought him not after the due order.

So the priests and the Levites sanctified themselves to bring up the ark of the LORD GOD of Israel.

And the children of the Levites bare the ark of GOD upon their shoulders as Moses commanded.

And David spake to the chief of the Levites, to appoint their brethren to be the singers with instruments of music, psalteries, and harps, and cymbals, sounding, by lifting up the voice with joy.

So David and the elders of Israel, and the captains over thousands went to bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD, out of the house of Obed-edom with joy.

And it came to pass as the ark of the covenant of the LORD came to the city of David, that Michal the daughter of Saul looking out at a window, saw king David dancing and playing, and she despised him in her heart.

So they brought the ark of God, and set it in the midst of the tent that David had pitched for it: and they offered burnt-sacrifices and peace-offerings before God.

And when David had made an end of offering the burnt-offerings, and the peace-offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD.

And he dealt to every one of Israel, both man and woman to every one a loaf of bread and a good piece of flesh, and a flagon of wine.

And he appointed certain of the Levites to minister before the ark of the LORD, and to record, and to thank and praise the LORD God of Israel, with psalteries, and with harps, with cymbals and with trumpets, continually before the ark of the covenant of God.

So he left there before the ark of the covenant of the LORD Asaph and his brethren, to minister before the ark continually, as every day's work required.

And Zadok the priest and his brethren the priests, before the tabernacle of the LORD, in the high place that was at Gibeon.

And all the people departed every man to his house: and David returned to bless his house.

And

And Michal Saul's daughter came out to meet David, and said, How glorious was the king of Israel to day, who appeared as one of the vain fellows.

And David said unto Michal, It was before the LORD, which chose me before thy father, and before all his house, to appoint me ruler over the people of the LORD, over Israel: therefore will I play before the LORD.

And I will yet be more vile than thus, and will be base in mine own sight: and of the maid-servants which thou hast spoken of, of them shall I be had in honour.

ANNOTATIONS AND REFLECTIONS.

Whilst the ark remained at the house of Obed-edom, David fully instructed himself concerning the requisite ceremonials; the priests and Levites having also thoroughly considered the matter, the congregation of Israel was once more assembled, and the procession began with solemnity and decorum. The Levites were arrayed in robes of fine linen; and the king assuming the character of an humble attendant on the ARK of God, laid aside his royal garments, and attired himself in a long robe, like that worn by the Levites, over which he put an ephod as a mark of distinction.

Before the procession began from the house of Obed-edom, David offered up a devout prayer; and declared his firm belief in the promises of God, to him and his posterity as follows.

DAVID'S PRAYER AT REMOVING THE ARK †.

LORD remember David, and all his afflictions :

How he swore unto the LORD, and vowed unto the mighty GOD of Jacob.

Surely I will not come into the tabernacle of my house, nor go up into my bed :

I will not give sleep to mine eyes, or slumber to mine eye-lids,

Until I find out a place for the LORD, an habitation for the mighty GOD of Jacob.

Arise, O LORD, into thy rest : thou, and the ark of thy strength.

Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness : and let thy saints shout for joy.

For thy servant David's sake : turn not away the face of thine anointed.

The LORD hath sworn in truth unto David, he will not turn from it. Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne.

If thy children will keep my covenant, and my testimony, that I shall teach them ; their children also shall sit upon thy throne for evermore.

For the LORD hath chosen Zion : he hath desired it for his habitation.

This is my rest for ever : here will I dwell, for I have desired it.

I will abundantly bless her provision : I will satisfy her poor with bread.

I will also clothe her priests with salvation : and her saints shall shout aloud for joy.

THE REMOVAL OF THE ARK. 133.

There will I make the horn of David to bud: I have ordained a lamp for mine anointed.

His enemies will I clothe with shame: but upon himself shall his crown flourish.

The latter part of this psalm bears evident marks of divine inspiration. It is supposed, that the following psalm was sung in divisions to solemn musick*.

P A R T I.

SUNG WHEN THE PRIESTS LIFTED UP THE ARK §.

Let GOD arise, let his enemies be scattered: let them also that hate him flee before him.

As smoke is driven away, so drive them away: as wax melteth before the fire, so let the wicked perish at the presence of GOD.

But let the righteous be glad: let them rejoice before GOD, yea, let them exceedingly rejoice.

Sing unto GOD, sing praises to his name: extol him that rideth upon the heavens by his name JAH, and rejoice before him.

A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows, is GOD in his holy habitation.

P A R T II.

SUNG WHEN THE ARK WAS PLACED ON THE SHOULDERS OF THE LEVITES.

O GOD, when thou wentest forth before thy people; when thou didst march through the wilderness.

The earth shook, the heavens also dropped at the presence of GOD: even Sinai itself was moved at the presence of GOD, the GOD of Israel.

* Dr. Chandler's Life of David. § Psalm lxxviii.

134 THE ARK REMOVED.

The LORD gave the word, great was the company of those that published it.

Kings of armies did flee apace : and she that tarried at home, divided the spoil.

Though ye have lien among the pots, yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold.

The words in the first part, agree with those used by Moses and the Israelites whenever they removed the ark : those in the second, served to remind the people of GOD's former mercies to the house of Jacob.

When the ark was in view of mount Sion, it is probable was sung

P A R T III.

The chariots of GOD are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels : the LORD is among them as in Sinai, in the holy place.

Blessed be the LORD, who daily loadeth us with benefits, even the GOD of our salvation.

He that is our GOD, is the GOD of salvation; and unto GOD the LORD belong the issues from death.

Sing unto GOD, ye kingdoms of the earth : O sing praises unto the LORD.

To him that rideth upon the heavens of heavens, which were of old ; lo, he doth send out his voice, and that a mighty voice.

Ascribe ye strength unto GOD : his excellency is over Israel, and his strength is in the clouds.

O GOD, thou art terrible out of thy holy places, the GOD of Israel is he that giveth strength and power unto his people ; blessed be GOD.

SOLEMN PROCESSION. 135

It * is supposed that the following psalm was set to musick on this occasion, and sung by way of dialogue by king and people: we may conjecture, that it began when they reached the foot of mount Sion.

The § earth is the LORD's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.

For he hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods.

When they arrived at the gates of Jerusalem, which may be considered as a type of heaven, it is likely that the king and his choir sung as follows:

Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in.

And those within answered:

Who is the king of glory?

To which the first answered:

The LORD, strong and mighty; the LORD, mighty in battle.

And now let us suppose, that the procession proceeded to the gates of the court of the tabernacle, the instruments playing the same airs; and the king, princes, and damsels, moving to the measure (as was the custom in those times); when they arrived at the gates of the tabernacle, they sung, and were answered as follows:

Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in.

Who is the King of Glory?

The Lord of Hosts, he is the King of Glory †.

When

* Dr. Delany's Life of David. § Psalm xxiv.

† The two learned authors, from whose works I have chiefly composed my comments on the Life of King David, differ in their application

136 DAVID'S THANKSGIVING.

When they had deposited the ark in the tabernacle, it is likely the following was sung:

DAVID'S THANKSGIVING, COMPOSED IN ORDER TO COMMEMORATE THE MANIFOLD BLESSINGS WHICH THE LORD HAD BESTOWED ON HIS PEOPLE; AND TO EXCITE THEIR GRATITUDE AND DEVOTION. IT WAS ON THIS DAY GIVEN TO ASAPH, THE CHIEF SINGER FOR THE TABERNACLE SERVICE †.

Give thanks unto the LORD, call upon his name, make known his deeds among the people.

Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him, talk ye of all his wondrous works.

Glory ye in his holy name: let the heart of them rejoice that seek the LORD.

Seek the LORD and his strength, seek his face continually.

Remember his marvellous works that he hath done, his wonders, and the judgments of his mouth;

O ye seed of Israel his servant, ye children of Jacob his chosen ones.

He is the LORD our God; his judgments are in all the earth.

Be ye mindful always of his covenant; the word which he commanded to a thousand generations;

Even of the covenant which he made with Abraham, and of his oath unto Isaac;

cation of psalms to this solemnity: that selected by each, appears to me well adapted to the occasion, therefore I have introduced them both; not with a view of obtruding my own opinion, but from the fear of omitting the psalm, which would excite the properest ideas in the minds of my readers. † 1 Chron. xvi. 8, &c.

THE ARK REMOVED. 137

And hath confirmed the same to Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting covenant.

Saying, Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan, the lot of your inheritance.

When ye were but few, even a few, and strangers in it: And when they went from nation to nation, and from one kingdom to another people;

He suffered no man to do them wrong: yea, he reprov'd kings for their sakes,

Saying, Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm.

Sing unto the LORD, all the earth; shew forth from day to day his salvation.

Declare his glory among the heathen; his marvellous works among all nations.

For great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised: he also is to be feared above all gods.

For all the gods of the people are idols: but the LORD made the heavens.

Glory and honour are in his presence, strength and gladness are in his place.

Give unto the LORD ye kindreds of the people, give unto the LORD glory and strength.

Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come before him; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.

Fear before him, all the earth: the world also shall be stable, that it be not moved.

Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice: and let men say among the nations, The LORD reigneth.

Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof: let the fields rejoice, and all that is therein.

Then

And

Then shall the trees of the wood sing out at the presence of the LORD, because he cometh to judge the earth.

O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.

And say ye, Save us, O God of our salvation, and gather us together, and deliver us from the heathen, that we may give thanks to thy holy name, and glory in thy praise.

Blessed be the LORD God of Israel for ever and ever: and all the people said, Amen, and praised the LORD.

“ It is supposed that the ark was carried to Jerusalem at the feast of tabernacles, at which time the Jews were obliged to live in booths and tents; and as their houses had flat roofs, there is reason to imagine they * built their bowers on the tops of them with ever-greens of various kinds; and that they also erected booths in ranges throughout the larger streets of the city. What a beautiful appearance must this have made, especially at night, when a number of lights glimmered through the branches; and how must the humane heart of David be delighted, when he considered all these bowers filled with people, happy in the consciousness of having discharged their duty towards God, and rejoicing in his returning favour; but above all, what satisfaction must arise in his mind from the reflection, that he was, under God, the cause of all this felicity! It † is likely that he made use of the following words in blessing his people.”

God || be merciful unto us, and bless us: and cause his face to shine upon us.

* Nehemiah, viii. 15, 16.

† See Delany's Life of David.

|| Psalm lxxvii.

That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations.

Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee.

O let the nations be glad and sing for joy: for thou shalt judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth.

Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee.

Then shall the earth yield her increase; and God, even our own God shall bless us.

God shall bless us, and all the ends of the earth shall fear him.

When David had blessed the people, and they were gone to join their families in their respective tents, he repaired to his house, to rejoice with his household; but Michal, who was offended with David for his great humility in laying aside his robes of royalty, and playing on his harp before the ark, reproached him, for thus levelling himself with his subjects, thinking that he had exposed himself to their scorn and contempt: her reproaches affected him not; for he was conscious that he had acted properly, and was certain, that his behaviour was not only approved by God, but would procure him esteem and honour rather than derision; for dancing was in those days frequently practised as a religious ceremony, on public solemnities.

“Miriam the prophetess, took a timbrel, and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances;” so also Jephthah’s daughter: other instances might be produced from sacred history. From whence

we

That

we may conclude, that David did not act with impropriety in this particular; and surely we cannot join with Michal, in condemning him for playing on his harp on so *joyful* an occasion; therefore, we must own, that the exposed *herself* most to contempt and derision, by laying aside the noblest ornaments of a royal matron, piety and humility towards God.

Though David, when seated on the throne of Israel, was at the height of worldly power and grandeur, he could not rest till he had established the public worship of God in his kingdom, and for this purpose was at incredible pains and expence. He had well considered the subject, and was convinced, that the practice of religious duties was absolutely necessary for the welfare of the state, as well as for the happiness of its individuals. His royal example had proper influence on his subjects, the sabbaths were regularly kept, and all the ordinances of the LORD observed with becoming reverence: the LORD *caused the light of his countenance to shine on them*, and they were prosperous and honourable.

S E C T.

S E C T. XIX.

NATHAN FIRST APPROVETH DAVID'S PURPOSE
TO BUILD AN HOUSE FOR THE ARK—AFTER-
WARDS BY GOD'S COMMAND FORBIDDETH HIM
—HE PROMISETH BLESSINGS TO HIS POSTERITY
—DAVID'S PRAYER AND THANKSGIVING.

AND it came to pass when the king sat
in his house, and the LORD had given
him rest round about from all his enemies ;

That the king said unto Nathan the pro-
phet, See now, I dwell in an house of cedar,
but the ark of GOD dwelleth within curtains.

And Nathan said to the king, Go, do all
that is in thine heart : for the LORD is with
thee.

And it came to pass that night, that the
word of the LORD came unto Nathan, saying,

Go and tell my servant David, Thus saith
the LORD, Shalt thou build me an house for
me to dwell in ?

Whereas I have not dwelt in any house,
since the time that I brought up the children

of

of Israel out of Egypt, even to this day, but have walked in a tent and in a tabernacle.

In all the places wherein I have walked with all the children of Israel, spake I a word with any of the tribes of Israel, whom I commanded to feed my people Israel, saying, Why build ye not me an house of cedar.

Now therefore, so shalt thou say unto my servant David, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I took thee from the sheep-cote, from following the sheep, to be ruler over my people, over Israel.

And I was with thee whithersoever thou wentest, and have cut off all thine enemies out of thy sight, and have made thee a great name, like unto the name of the great men that are in the earth.

(Moreover, I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and I will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more: neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more as before time,

And as since the time that I commanded judges to be over my people Israel, and have caused thee to rest from all thine enemies) Also the LORD telleth thee, that he will make thee an house.

And

And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom.

He shall build an house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever.

I will be his father, and he shall be my son: if he commit iniquity I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men:

But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee.

And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever.

According to all these words, and according to all this vision, so did Nathan speak unto David.

Then went king David in, and sat before the LORD, and he said, Who am I, O LORD God? and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?

And this was yet a small thing in thy sight, O LORD God; but thou hast spoken also of thy servant's house for a great while

to

And

to come; and is this the manner of men, O LORD GOD?

And what can David say more unto thee? for thou LORD GOD knowest thy servant.

For thy word's sake, and according to thine own heart hast thou done all these great things, to make thy servant know them.

Wherefore thou art great, O LORD GOD: for there is none like thee, neither is there any God besides thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears.

And what one nation in the earth is like thy people, even like Israel, whom God went to redeem for a people to himself, and to make him a name, and to do for you great things, and terrible, for thy land before thy people which thou redeemedst to thee from Egypt, from the nations and their gods?

For thou hast confirmed to thyself thy people Israel to be a people unto thee for ever: and thou LORD, art become their God.

And now, O LORD GOD, the word that thou hast spoken concerning thy servant, and concerning his house, establish it for ever, and do as thou hast said.

And let thy name be magnified for ever, saying, The LORD of hosts is the God over

Israel:

Israel: and let the house of thy servant David be established before thee.

For thou, O LORD of hosts, God of Israel, hast revealed to thy servant saying, I will build thee an house: therefore hath thy servant found in his heart to pray this prayer unto thee.

And now O LORD GOD, thou art that God, and thy words be true, and thou hast promised this goodness unto thy servant.

Therefore now let it please thee to bless the house of thy servant, that it may continue for ever before thee; for thou, O LORD GOD, hast spoken it, and with thy blessing let the house of thy servant be blessed for ever.

ANNOTATIONS AND REFLECTIONS.

David was now at rest from his enemies, and had established the *public worship* at JERUSALEM; but he wished to give the service of GOD all the dignity due to it, to diffuse the GLORY of the LORD *throughout the ends of the earth*, that the light of true religion should rise from JERUSALEM, "*like the sun from his tabernacle; that its going forth should be from the uttermost parts of the heavens, and its circuit unto the ends of it, and that nothing should be hid from the light and influence of it.*"

146 DAVID'S THANKSGIVING.

David had a deep sense of the deficiency of his *best* *endeavours*, and an ardent desire to *do more*, therefore formed a scheme for building a magnificent temple. Nathan the prophet was his friend, with him therefore, he consulted; who thinking it a laudable design, encouraged him to put it in execution; but as at this time he only spake according to the dictates of his own reason, he advised wrong, for the LORD revealed to him by the holy Spirit, that he had appointed other business for David; and to soften the refusal, graciously promised that his son should build it, and that he would establish his kingdom *for ever*. David was overcome with gratitude and astonishment, and hastened to the Tabernacle, to pour out his acknowledgments to his divine Benefactor; his words need no comment, for I am sure, my dear, you are able to understand, that they are expressive of the utmost piety, modesty and humility.

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S E C T. XX.

DAVID SUBDUETH THE PHILISTINES AND THE
MOABITES—SMITETH THE SYRIANS—TOI
SENDETH JOTHAM WITH PRESENTS—DAVID
DEDICATETH THEM TO GOD—SOME EXPLOITS
OF DAVID'S WORTHIES—HE PUTTETH GAR-
RISONS IN EDM.

AND after this it came to pass, that Da-
vid smote the Philistines and subdued
them: and David took Metheg-ammah out
of the hand of the Philistines.

And he smote Moab, and measured them
with a line, casting them down to the
ground: even with two lines measured he,
to put to death: and with one full line to
keep alive: and so the Moabites became
David's servants, and brought gifts.

David smote also Hadadezer the son of
Rehob, king of Zobah, as he went to reco-
ver his border at the river Euphrates.

And David took from him a thousand
chariots, and seven hundred horsemen, and

twenty thousand footmen: and David houghed all the chariot-horses, but reserved of them for an hundred chariots.

And when the Syrians of Damascus came to succour Hadadezer king of Zobah, David slew of the Syrians two and twenty thousand men.

Then David put garrisons in Syria of Damascus: and the Syrians became servants to David, and brought gifts: and the Lord preserved David whithersoever he went.

And David took the shields of gold that were on the servants of Hadadezer, and brought them to Jerusalem.

And from Betah, and from Berothai, cities of Hadadezer, king David took exceeding much brass.

When Toi king of Hamath heard that David had smitten all the host of Hadadezer,

Then Toi sent Joram his son unto king David, to salute him, and to bless him, because he had fought against Hadadezer, and smitten him: (for Hadadezer had wars with Toi) and Joram brought with him vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and vessels of brass;

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Which also king David did dedicate unto the LORD, with the silver and gold that he had dedicate of all nations which he subdued :

Of Syria, and of Moab, and of the children of Ammon, and of the Philistines, and of Amalek, and of the spoil of Hadadezer son of Rehob, king of Zobah.

And David gat him a name when he returned from smiting of the Syrians in the valley of salt, being eighteen thousand men.

And it came to pass when David was in Edom, and Joab the captain of the host was gone up to bury the slain, after he had smitten every male in Edom :

(For six months did Joab remain there with all Israel, until he had cut off every male in Edom)

That Hadad who was of the king's seed in Edom fled, he and certain Edomites of his father's servants with him, to go into Egypt ; Hadad being yet a little child.

And Joab put garrisons in Edom ; throughout all Edom put he garrisons, and all they of Edom became David's servants : and the LORD preserved David whithersoever he went.

And David reigned over all Israel, and David executed judgment and justice unto all his people.

And Joab the son of Zeruiah was over the host; and Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud was recorder;

And Zadok the son of Ahitub, and Ahimelech the son of Abiathar, were the priests; and Seriah was the scribe;

And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was over both the Cherethites and the Pelethites; and David's sons were chief rulers.

Also Jonathan, David's uncle was a counsellor, a wise man, and a scribe: and Jehiel the son of Hachmoni was with the king's sons.

And Ahitophel was the king's counsellor, and Hushai the Archite was the king's companion.

And after Ahitophel was Jehoiada the son of Benaiah, and Abiathar: and the general of the king's army was Joab.

And over the king's treasures was Azmaveth the son of Adiel; and over the storehouses in the fields, in the cities and in the villages, and in the castles, was Jehonathan the son of Uzziah.

And

And over them that did the work of the field for tillage of the ground, was Ezri the son of Chelub.

And over the vineyards was Shemei the Ramathite: over the increase of the vineyards for the wine-cellars was Zabdi the Shiphmite.

And over the olive-trees and the ficamore-trees that were in the low plains, was Baal-hanan the Gederite: and over the cellars of oil was Joash.

And over the herds that fed in Sharon was Shitrai, the Sharonite; and over the herds that were in the valley, was Shaphat the son of Adlai.

Over the camels also was Obil the Ishmeelite: and over the asses was Jehdeiah the Meronothite.

And over the flocks was Jaziz the Hagerite: all these were the rulers of the substance which was king David's.

These be the names of the mighty men whom David had: The Tachmonite that sat in the seat, chief among the captains, (the same was Adino the Eznite) he lift up his spear against eight hundred, whom he slew at one time.

And after him was Eleazar the son of Do-
do the Ahohite, one of the three mighty men
with David, when they defied the Philistines
that were there gathered together to battle,
and the men of Israel were gone away.

He arose, and smote the Philistines until
his hand was weary, and his hand clave unto
the sword: and the LORD wrought a great
victory that day; and the people returned
after him only to spoil.

And after him was Shammah the son of
Agee the Hararite: and the Philistines were
gathered together into a troop, where was a
piece of ground full of lentiles: and the
people fled from the Philistines.

But he stood in the midst of the ground
and defended it, and slew the Philistines;
and the LORD wrought a great victory.

And Abishai the brother of Joab, the son
of Zeruiah, was chief among three; and he
lift up his spear against three hundred, and
slew them, and had the name among three.

And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, the son
of a valiant man, of Kabzeel, who had done
many acts, he slew two lion-like men of
Moab: he went down also and slew a lion
in the midst of a pit in time of snow.

And

And he slew an Egyptian, a goodly man: and the Egyptian had a spear in his hand; but he went down to him with a staff, and plucked the spear out of the Egyptian's hand, and slew him with his own spear.

ANNOTATIONS AND REFLECTIONS.

David understanding from Nathan's answer, that he was not to build a temple unto the LORD, but that he was appointed to subdue the enemies of Israel, and establish his people in peace and security; reflected, that as they were not yet in full possession of the promised land, it was his peculiar business to drive out the idolaters, and settle the tribes of Israel in their stead. He therefore began with the Philistines, having made no treaty with them; and it is likely that even Achish, who had behaved in so friendly a manner when David fled to him for succour, had joined in committing hostilities against him as king of Israel; besides, it was utterly inconsistent with David's present situation, to shew partial favour towards Achish, from private motives.

By Metheg Ammah, which David took from the Philistines, is meant the city of * Gath and territories belonging to it.

The Moabites had been so effectually subdued by Ehud, that we read no more of them in sacred history till the days of Saul, who warred against them with success; † and you know that the king of Moab be-

* 1 Chron. xviii. 1. † 1 Sam. xiv. 47.

154 DAVID'S DISPOSAL OF HIS CAPTIVES.

haved with great hospitality to David's parents; however, when he came to the crown they entered into a confederacy against him with the neighbouring † nations; and there was reason to expect they would soon renew their hostilities, otherwise David would not have made war with them; because the law expressly commanded, that the Israelites should not attack the Edomites, Moabites, and Ammonites, without *provocation*; for this reason, David was particularly careful to preserve as many of their lives as he could. Having * conquered the whole country, he took an exact survey of every part of it, "*casting them to the ground*;" that is to say, *laying level their strong holds and fortified places*, excepting such as he thought proper to garrison with his troops; then he marked out two tracks of the country, one consisting of those Moabites who had been most active in the war against him, these he condemned to death; and the inhabitants of the other he saved alive, on condition of their paying him tribute. This seems to be the meaning of *his measuring them with a line*, &c.

David next went to *recover his border at the river Euphrates*, that is to say, extend his dominions as far as the grant given by God to Abraham in these words, "*Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates*;" but he met with great opposition from Hadadezar, who was at that time king of Zobah in the land of Syria.

The † Syrians were descended partly from Aram the youngest son of Shem, and partly from Hamathi one of the eleven sons of Canaan. This country, which

† Psalm lxxviii. 4 to 9. * Chandler's Life of David. † See the History of the Syrians in Universal History.

was of great extent, was divided into many petty kingdoms, of which Zobah was one. Rehob is supposed to have been the first king of it, and to have laid the foundation of his son's grandeur. Hadadezar was a great and ambitious prince, and seems to have aspired at the universal monarchy of Syria; but his opposition to David was attended with such losses, that he was under the necessity of calling in the aid of the people of Damascus (another part of Syria) which place was then without a king; but they soon after received for their sovereign, Rézon, * one of Hadadezar's subjects who revolted from him.

We may form an high idea of the riches of the Syrians, from the number of chariots and horses which even those kings who reigned over a very small part of it possessed; and from the golden shields which David took from their soldiers: we may justly conclude, that David not only hamstringed the horses, but burned the chariots in the fire agreeably to God's command. I have already told you, that this command was given to prevent their placing dependance on their own power, and that they might trust in God alone.

You read that David put garrisons in Edom; from which we may conjecture, that the Edomites also had joined the former conspiracy "*to cut off Israel from being a nation, that the name of Israel might no longer remain in remembrance.*" And from the account of Joab's severity towards them, there is reason to suppose, that as the Edomites had abused the mercy which God had commanded to be shewed towards them, David was authorized to put them to the sword. We must

* See 1 Kings xi. 23.

156 DESTRUCTION OF THE EDMITES.

not, however imagine, that Joab destroyed *all* the inhabitants in the whole country of Edom; though we are told, *that he cut off all the males*; for this expression may only extend to those who were in arms against him, and shews that he spared the women and children.

From the time of Moses, when you know the Edomites refused Israel a passage through their land, sacred history is silent about them, except in respect to their joining the confederacy above-mentioned; but it appears, that they had employed themselves in extending their dominions, and applied themselves to trade and navigation, particularly in the Arabian gulph. They dealt in very rich commodities: pure gold, gold of Ophir, the topaz of Ethiopia, corals, pearls, &c. and became a very considerable kingdom; but they now began to feel the effects of Isaac's prophecy, *that the elder should serve the younger*; for those that were not destroyed, were either brought into subjection by Joab, or fled with their young king into Egypt.

Though David was engaged in wars abroad, he did not neglect the administration of justice at home; all his subjects were safe under his protection, and shared the fruits of his good government. He made choice of able ministers to discharge the great offices of the state. Joab was commander in chief of the forces; he was a valiant man; but there is reason to suppose, David would willingly have preferred another to his place on account of his having murdered Asahel; but that he could not remove him without raising commotions in the state, as Joab had a great deal of power.

Jehiel was tutor and governor of the king's younger sons. Ahijah was recorder, that is to say, a remem-

brancer or writer of chronicles. Jonathan and Seraiah were the scribes, or (as is supposed) the principal secretaries of state. The brave Benaiah, who performed noble exploits, was the captain of the life-guard.

Cherethites * was another name for *Philistines*; but we cannot suppose that David preferred those who had been the inveterate enemies of his country (even if they were now become *profelytes*) to his own subjects: the most probable conjecture therefore is, that the *Cherethites* were those troops who had resorted to him in his distress, gone along with him into Philistia, and adhered to him in his calamities.

The *Pelethites* are supposed to have been those who resorted to him at Ziglag, whilst he was still under the protection of Achish, and might be denominated *Pelethites*, from the name of their leader † *Pelet*, the son of Azmaveth.

* Delany's Life of David.

† 1 Chron. xii. 3.

S E C T. XXI.

DAVID SENDETH FOR MEPHIBOSHETH JONATHAN'S SON—RESTORETH TO HIM ALL SAUL'S PATERNAL ESTATE—MAKETH ZIBA HIS FARMER.

AND David said, Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may shew him kindness for Jonathan's sake?

And there was of the house of Saul, a servant whose name was Ziba: and when they had called him unto David, the king said unto him, Art thou Ziba? And he said, thy servant is he.

And the king said, Is there not yet any of the house of Saul, that I may shew the kindness of God unto him? and Ziba said unto the king, Jonathan hath yet a son, which is lame on his feet.

And the king said unto him, Where is he? And Ziba said unto the king, Behold, he is in the house of Michir, the son of Ammiel, in Lo-debar.

Then

Then king David sent, and fet him out of the house of Michar, the son of Ammiel, from Lo-debar.

Now when Mephibosheth the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, was come unto David, he fell on his face, and did reverence. And David said, Mephibosheth. And he answered, Behold thy servant.

And David said unto him, Fear not; for I will surely shew thee kindness, for Jonathan thy father's sake, and will restore thee all the land of Saul thy father, and thou shalt eat bread at my table continually.

And he bowed himself, and said, What is thy servant, that thou shouldest look upon such a dead dog as I am?

Then the king called to Ziba Saul's servant, and said unto him, I have given unto thy master's son all that pertained to Saul, and to all his house.

Thou therefore and thy sons, and thy servants shall till the land for him, and thou shalt bring in the fruits, that thy master's son may have food to eat: but Mephibosheth thy master's son shall eat bread alway at my table. Now Ziba had fifteen sons, and twenty servants.

Then

Then said Ziba unto the king, According to all that my lord the king hath commanded his servant, so shall thy servant do. As for Mephibosheth, said the king, he shall eat at my table, as one of the king's sons.

And Mephibosheth had a young son, whose name was Micha: and all that dwelt in the house of Ziba, were servants unto Mephibosheth.

So Mephibosheth dwelt in Jerusalem: for he did eat continually at the king's table; and was lame on both his feet.

ANNOTATIONS AND REFLECTIONS.

Whenever David enjoyed an interval of peace, he studied to improve it to some good purpose; his gratitude to God had lately been exerted in bringing back the Ark, and the pious design of building a temple for public worship: religion was his first care, and the good of his subjects was the next.

No doubt he often recollected with painful regret and tender sorrow, his dear friend Jonathan; but whilst his kingdom was in an unsettled state, he could not with propriety and safety introduce into his family one of Saul's race; besides, it is probable, that David supposed Mephibosheth was dead (as his nurse concealed him) and that he thought there were none of Jonathan's posterity alive; but as his covenant with
him

MEPHIBOSHETH'S ESTABLISHMENT. 161

him remained firmly impressed on his memory, (as soon as he had regulated the affairs of the state) he resolved to shew kindness to any one of Saul's family for Jonathan's sake; and when he found on enquiry, that there was still a son of his beloved friend left, his heart panted with impatience to shew him kindness, to succour and protect him.

How kindly did David remove the fears of Mephibosheth, and provide for the support of his household, by giving him the paternal inheritance of Saul, and receiving him into his own family!

Mephibosheth was now raised from a state of obscurity and apprehension, to plenty, ease, and magnificence; he had an ample fortune, and was treated as one of the royal family; besides all this, he enjoyed the confidence of the king, who without doubt, took every opportunity of engaging his gratitude, by acts of generosity and tenderness. So you find, my dear, that David was faithful in the performance of his promises, and did not suffer prosperity and success to obliterate the remembrance of those benefits which had been conferred on him in the time of his distress.

SECT.

S E C T. XXII.

DAVID'S AMBASSADORS ABUSED BY THE
AMMONITES—A WAR ENSUES.

AND it came to pass after this, that the king of the children of Ammon died, and Hanun his son reigned in his stead.

Then said David, I will shew kindness unto Hanun the son of Nahash, as his father shewed kindness unto me. And David sent to comfort him by the hand of his servants, for his father. And David's servants came into the land of the children of Ammon.

And the princes of the children of Ammon said unto Hanun their lord, Thinkest thou that David doth honour thy father, that he hath sent comforters unto thee? hath not David rather sent his servants unto thee, to search the city, and to spy it out, and to overthrow it?

Wherefore Hanun took David's servants, and shaved off one half of their beards and sent them away.

When

When they told it unto David, he sent to meet them, because the men were greatly ashamed; and the king said, Tarry at Jericho until your beards be grown, and then return.

And when the children of Ammon saw that they stank before David, the children of Ammon sent and hired the Syrians of Beth-rehob, and the Syrians of Zobah; twenty thousand footmen, and of king of Maacah, a thousand men, and of Ish-tob twelve thousand men.

And when David heard of it, he sent Joab, and all the host of the mighty men.

And the children of Ammon came out, and put the battle in array at the entering in of the gate: and the Syrians of Zoba and of Rehob, and Ish-tob, and Maacah were by themselves in the field.

When Joab saw that the front of the battle was against him before and behind, he chose of all the choice men of Israel, and put them in array against the Syrians.

And the rest of the people he delivered into the hands of Abishai his brother, that he might put them in array against the children of Ammon.

And he said, If the Syrians be too strong for me, then thou shalt help me: but if the children

children of Ammon be too strong for thee, then I will come and help thee.

Be of good courage, and let us play the men for our people, and for the cities of our God : and the LORD do that which seemeth him good.

And Joab drew nigh, and the people that were with him, unto the battle against the Syrians: and they fled before him.

And when the children of Ammon saw that the Syrians were fled, then fled they also before Abishai, and entered into the city: so Joab returned from the children of Ammon, and came to Jerusalem.

And when the Syrians saw that they were smitten before Israel, they gathered themselves together.

And Hadarezer sent, and brought out the Syrians that were beyond the river: and they came to Helam: and Shobach the captain of the host of Hadarezer went before them.

And when it was told David, he gathered all Israel together, and passed over Jordan, and came to Helam: and the Syrians set themselves in array against David, and fought with him.

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And the Syrians fled before Israel, and David slew the men of seven hundred chariots of the Syrians, and forty thousand horsemen, and smote Shobach the captain of their host, who died there.

And when all the kings that were servants to Hadarezer saw that they were smitten before Israel, they made peace with Israel, and served them. So the Syrians feared to help the children of Ammon any more.

ANNOTATIONS AND REFLECTIONS.

What particular kindness Nahash had shewn to David we are not informed, but it must have been whilst he was persecuted by Saul.

The indignity which Hanun put upon David's ambassadors was very great, because long beards and long garments were marks of honour and distinction; and cutting off the beard was a matter of the highest reproach; for it was inflicted in some places as a punishment for heinous offences, and was a particular insult to the Jews, as their religion prohibited their cutting off any part of their beards.

David, though he must naturally resent this contemptuous and injurious treatment of his ambassadors, did not make any preparations for war, till the Ammonites, who expected to feel the effects of his resentment, had hired confederates and taken the field. It
was

was a fixed principle with David, never to indulge his *own* revenge; therefore we may conclude, that he referred himself to God, and had permission to send forth his army with Joab to repel the invasion.

Joab inadvertently exposed himself and his army to great danger, by not gaining proper information in respect to the situation of the enemy; but with a happy presence of mind, and proper confidence in God, he animated his soldiers by a noble speech, and they drove their enemies before them.

Whether the season of the year was too far advanced to keep the field, or for what reason Joab returned to Jerusalem we are not told; but it seems, the Syrians expected another attack, and prepared accordingly; when David learnt this, he collected his troops and went against them in person, a battle ensued, in which was the greatest slaughter that is recorded in any of David's wars.

The gaining of this battle, effectually finished the Syrian war, and established David's dominions on that side, to the utmost extent of God's promise to Abraham. "Now * was David advanced to the highest pitch of earthly power and grandeur; he had been successful in eight several wars, all righteously begun; and what is very extraordinary, had fought no battle which he did not win, and assaulted no city which he did not take, but *the LORD was with him.*"

* Delany's Life of David.

S E C T. XXIII.

DAVID CAUSETH URIAH TO BE SLAIN IN
BATTLE—AND TAKETH BATHSHEBA TO BE
HIS WIFE.

AND it came to pass, that after the year was expired, at the time when kings go forth to battle, that David sent Joab and his servants with him, and all Israel; and they destroyed the children of Ammon, and besieged Rabbah: but David tarried still at Jerusalem.

And it came to pass, that as David walked on the roof of his house, that he beheld a woman, and she was beautiful.

And David sent and enquired after her, and one said, Is not this Bathsheba the wife of Uriah the Hittite.

And it came to pass that David wrote a letter to Joab, saying, Set ye Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle, and retire ye from him, that he may be smitten, and die.

And

And it came to pass when Joab observed the city, that he assigned Uriah unto a place where he knew that valiant men were.

And the men of the city went out, and fought with Joab: and there fell some of the people of the servants of David, and Uriah the Hittite died also.

Then Joab sent, and told David all the things concerning the war.

And charged the messenger, saying, When thou hast made an end of telling the matters of the war unto the king,

And if so be that the king's wrath arise, and he say unto thee, Wherefore approached ye so nigh unto the city when ye did fight? knew ye not that they would shoot from the wall?

Who smote Abimelech the son of Jerubesheth? did not a woman cast a piece of a millstone upon him from the wall that he died in Thebez? why went ye nigh the wall? then say thou, Thy servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also.

So the messenger went, and came and shewed David all that Joab had sent him for.

And the messenger said unto David, Surely the men prevailed against us, and came

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out unto us into the field, and we were upon them even unto the entering of the gate.

And the shooters shot from off the wall upon thy servants, and some of the king's servants be dead, and thy servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also.

Then David said unto the messenger, Thus shalt thou say unto Joab, Let not this thing displease thee: for the sword devour-eth one as well as another: make thy battle more strong against the city, and overthrow it; and encourage thou him.

And when the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah her husband was dead, she mourned for her husband.

And when the mourning was past, David sent, and set her to his house, and she became his wife, and bare him a son: but the thing that David had done displeased the LORD.

And the LORD sent Nathan unto David: and he came unto him, and said unto him, There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor.

The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds:

But the poor man had nothing save one little ewe-lamb, which he had bought and

nourished up: and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter.

And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flocks, and of his own herd, to dress for the way-faring man that was come unto him, but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him.

And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man, and he said to Nathan, As the LORD liveth, the man that hath done this thing, shall surely die.

And he shall restore the lamb four-fold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity.

And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man. Thus saith the LORD GOD of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul:

And I gave thee thy master's house, and I gave thee the house of Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul; and if that had been too little I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things.

Wherefore

DAVID'S CONTRITION. 171

Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the LORD, to do evil in his sight? thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon.

Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house; because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife.

Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will raise up evil unto thee out of thine own house, for thou didst it secretly, but I will do this thing before Israel, and before the sun.

And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the LORD. And Nathan said unto David, The LORD also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die.

Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee, shall surely die.

ANNOTATIONS AND REFLECTIONS.

Are you not quite shocked, my dear, to read, that David, who was so well acquainted with his duty, should commit such enormous crimes? The sin of taking

another man's wife, which is called adultery, was forbidden under the Jewish law on pain of death; yet David was not only guilty of it, but added treachery and murder to it! I need not enlarge on the nature of his offences, for I am sure your own reason will teach you, that they were very great; and I dare say you are grieved, to meet with such a blemish in so good a character. * Nothing can be said in excuse for David; and it is to be feared, that prosperity had made him less attentive to the performance of his religious exercises, as they would have kept his mind from desiring, what God's law forbade him to covet: we * will however suppose, that he suffered in private, all the agonies of remorse and self-condemnation; but God required more, and therefore sent the prophet Nathan to bring him to public confession; Nathan executed his commission with so much judgment and address, that the king without knowing it, pronounced sentence on himself. Did he deserve to die who had taken his neighbour's lamb? How much more he who had taken his neighbour's wife, and caused him to be slain? Who had abused God's bounty, and despised the commandment of the LORD?

David did not offer to extenuate his guilt, but stung with shame, and oppressed with dread of divine vengeance so justly due, acknowledged his sin; and the LORD, knowing that his penitence was sincere, to save him from despair, permitted Nathan to assure him, that he would *spare his life*, and *save him from eternal death*; but it was necessary, for the honour of God, that some exemplary punishment should fall on such a

* Delany's Life of King David.

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DAVID'S CONFESSION. 173

sinner, lest blasphemous men should say, *the LORD was partial in his dealings, and a respecter of persons*: and you will find, that all the judgments which Nathan pronounced, were inflicted on David afterwards. As soon as the king found that his guilt was known to the world, he resolved to do all in his power to wipe off the reproach he had brought on that holy religion which he had taken such pains to propagate; and make all possible reparation for his offence, both to God and man. Could the blood of thousands of burnt sacrifices have washed away the stain of guilt from his polluted mind, gladly would he have offered them; but for such crimes, the only sacrifice that could be acceptable to the LORD was, repentance and humiliation; he therefore resolved to make † a public confession before his people, and for this purpose composed the following psalm, commanding it to be sung in the tabernacle, in the presence of the congregation, himself attending, and prostrate before the throne of mercy.

DAVID'S CONFESSION*.

Have mercy upon me, O GOD, according to thy loving kindness; according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.

Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.

For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me.

† Delany's Life of David. * Psalm li.

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* Psalm li.

174 DAVID'S CONFESSION.

Against thee, thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.

Behold, I was shapen in iniquity: and in sin did my mother conceive me.

Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts; and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.

Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

Make me to hear joy and gladness: that the bones which thou hast broken, may rejoice.

Hide thy face from my sins; and blot out all my iniquities.

Create in me a clean heart, O GOD; and renew a right spirit within me.

Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy Spirit from me.

Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit.

Then will I teach transgressors thy ways, and sinners shall be converted unto thee.

Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O GOD, thou GOD of my salvation: and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness.

O LORD, open thou my lips, and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise.

For thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt-offering.

The sacrifices of GOD are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O GOD, thou wilt not despise.

Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion: build thou the walls of Jerusalem.

Then

Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt-offering, and whole burnt-offering; then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar.

Think, my dear, that you behold the greatest monarch upon earth thus humbled for his sins before God, confessing his shame with contrition and confusion of face, calling out for mercy, and imploring pardon in the presence of his meanest subjects; and I am sure you must feel the greatest abhorrence of guilt, which alone could reduce him to such a situation. Besides the displeasure of God, and the reproach he had brought on religion, David was scorned by his enemies, and insulted by his inferiors; surely, no one will be encouraged to imitate him in his crimes; for supposing that they could even be certain of practising the same degree of penitence, what pleasure on earth can be worth so dear a purchase? But you will be able to comprehend his accumulated distress better from his own * words, than from any description I am able to give of it.

I am weary of my crying, my throat is dried: mine eyes fail while I wait for my God.

O GOD, thou knowest my foolishness; and my sins are not hid from thee.

Let not them that wait on thee, O LORD GOD of hosts, be ashamed for my sake: let not those that seek thee, be confounded for my sake, O GOD of Israel.

Because for thy sake I have borne reproach: shame hath covered my face.

* Psalm lxi.

174 DAVID'S CONFESSION.

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DAVID'S HUMILIATION. 175

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* Psalm lxi.

176 DAVID'S HUMILIATION.

I am become a stranger unto my brethren, and an alien unto my mother's children.

For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee, are fallen upon me.

When I wept, and chastered my soul with fasting, that was to my reproach.

I made sackcloth also my garment: and I became a proverb to them.

They that sit in the gate, speak against me; and I was the song of the drunkards.

But as for me, my prayer is unto thee, O LORD, in an acceptable time: O GOD, in the multitude of thy mercy bear me, in the truth of thy salvation.

Deliver me out of the mire, and let me not sink: let me be delivered from them that hate me, and out of the deep waters.

Let not the water-flood overflow me, neither let the deep swallow me up, and let not the pit shut her mouth upon me.

Hear me, O LORD, for thy loving kindness is good; turn unto me according to the multitude of thy tender mercies.

And hide not thy face from thy servant, for I am in trouble: hear me speedily.

Draw nigh unto my soul, and redeem it: deliver me because of mine enemies.

Thou hast known my reproach and my shame, and my dishonour: mine adversaries are all before thee.

Reproach hath broken my heart, and I am full of heaviness: and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none.

SECT.

S E C T. XXIV.

DAVID'S CHILD IS STRUCK WITH SICKNESS—
HIS SORROW ON THAT OCCASION, AND BEHAVIOUR WHEN HE DIETH.

AND Nathan departed unto his house : and the LORD struck the child that Uriah's wife bare unto David, and it was very sick.

David therefore besought God for the child, and David fasted, and went in, and lay all night upon the earth.

And the elders of his house arose, and went to him, to raise him up from the earth : but he would not, neither did he eat bread with them.

And it came to pass on the seventh day, that the child died : and the servants of David feared to tell him that the child was dead : for they said, Behold, while the child was yet alive, we spake unto him, and he would not hearken unto our voice : how

will he then vex himself, if we tell him that the child is dead ?

But when David saw that his servants whispered, David perceived that the child was dead : therefore David said unto his servants, Is the child dead ? And they said, He is dead.

Then David arose from the earth, and washed and anointed himself, and changed his apparel, and came into the house of the LORD, and worshipped : then he came to his own house, and when he required, they set bread before him, and he did eat.

Then said his servants unto him, What thing is this that thou hast done ? thou didst fast and weep for the child while it was alive, but when the child was dead, thou didst rise and eat bread.

And he said, While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept : for I said, Who can tell whether God will be gracious to me, that the child may live ?

But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast ? can I bring him back again ? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.

And David comforted Bathsheba his wife, and she bare a son and called his name Solomon ; and the LORD loved him.

DAVID'S CONSOLATION. 179

And he sent by the hand of Nathan the prophet ; and he called his name Jedidiah, because of the LORD.

ANNOTATIONS AND REFLECTIONS.

It was very natural for David, in his peculiar situation, to feel the most pungent sorrow on account of the sickness of his child, though it was so very young ; for he suffered on this occasion, as a sinner, as well as a parent ; but when it was dead you find, *he ceased to grieve*, for he knew it was his duty to submit with patience and resignation to the divine will ; and since its sufferings in this life were over, it was no longer an object of tender commiseration, but doubtless happy, through the infinite mercy of God.

How gracious was the LORD in sending Nathan with a message of consolation ! from which David derived hopes, that his penitence was acceptable, and his prayer heard. He now resolved to bear all the temporal evils that had been threatned, with patience and resignation ; since God had not “ *cast him out from his presence, nor taken his holy Spirit from him* *.”

* As David's crime in respect to Uriah, is a great subject of derision to SCOFFERS, I beg leave to refer my readers to his life written by Dr. Chandler and Dr. Delany, for a satisfactory discussion of the subject, as the nature of my plan will not admit of my producing the arguments which are given by them in extenuation of it.

S E C T. XXV.

WAR WITH THE AMMONITES—DAVID'S
TREATMENT OF HIS VANQUISHED ENEMIES.

AND Joab fought against Rabbah of the children of Ammon, and took the royal city.

And Joab sent messengers to David, and said, I have fought against Rabbah, and have taken the city of waters.

Now therefore, gather the rest of the people together, and encamp against the city, and take it: lest I take the city, and it be called after my name.

And David gathered all the people together, and went to Rabbah, and fought against it, and took it.

And he took their king's crown from off his head, (the weight whereof was a talent of gold, with the precious stones) and it was set on David's head: and he brought forth the spoil of the city in great abundance.

And

And he brought forth the people that were therein, and put them under saws, and under harrows of iron, and under axes of iron, and made them pass through the brick-kiln; and thus did he unto all the cities of the children of Ammon. So David and all the people returned to Jerusalem.

ANNOTATIONS AND REFLECTIONS.

From the continuance of the war with the Ammonites, we may suppose, that the Israelites had been intimidated by the death of Uriah and his brave followers, and had not proceeded with so much vigour as before, and that the enemy made a more resolute resistance; at length, however, Joab made a breach in that part of the city where their reservoirs of water were, which reduced them to the necessity of submitting; Joab therefore exhorted king David to come and put a finishing hand to the siege.

This was an expedition which came very seasonably to remove David's melancholy, to relieve his distress, and to blot out the memory of his guilt in relation to Uriah, and also to revive his glory in arms. Rabbah was a royal and populous city, the metropolis of Arabia Felix, watered, and in some measure surrounded, by the river Jabbok. It had its name from its grandeur, and was now in the height of its glory; and therefore we may suppose, that the taking of it brought a great accession

cession of glory to David, as we are told it did of wealth.

It is said that the *weight* of "*the king of Rabbah's crown was a talent of gold* *." This text is supposed to be translated wrong, and that, it should be said, the *value* of the crown with the precious stones made a talent of gold, amounting to about 5000 pounds.

It appears that the king of Rabbah was deposed, and David crowned in his stead; this king was Hanun, who had treated David's ambassadors with so much indignity; and it is imagined that David made *Shobi*, another son of Nahash, his viceroy at Rabbah; for in a subsequent part of this history it is said, that Shobi was in friendship with David, and shewed him great kindness.

David has been greatly censured for his treatment of his prisoners in this defeat. To be sure it is dreadful to read of such tortures; but if they were actually inflicted, it could only have been by way of retaliation. The Israelites you know, were raised up on purpose to be a scourge upon every vice and enormity in the idolatrous nations; and it was an invariable, and fixed point of duty, to retort upon those sinners, every cruelty they committed. But there is another way of explaining this text, which is, I think, more satisfactory: a † learned author assures us, that it may be translated, "*he brought forth the inhabitants of it, and put them to the saw, to iron mines, and to iron axes; and transported them to the brick kilns*;" that is, he reduced them to slavery, and put them to the most servile em-

* Essay for a new Translation. † Chandler's Life of David.
ploysments;

DAVID'S RIGOUR. 183

ployments; some to one kind of labour, some to another, by which means he brought them into entire subjection. It is certain that David did not destroy all the Ammonites; because you will read, that in the reigns of future kings of Israel, they were very numerous.

SECT.

S E C T. XXVI.

ABSALOM KILLETH HIS BROTHER AMNON.

AND it came to pass, that Absalom, David's son, had sheep-shearers in Baal-hazor, which is beside Ephraim : and Absalom invited all the king's sons.

And Absalom came to the king, and said, Behold now, thy servant hath sheep-shearers, let the king, I beseech thee, and his servants, go with thy servant.

And the king said to Absalom, Nay, my son, let us not all now go, lest we be chargeable unto thee. And he pressed him : howbeit he would not go, but blessed him.

Then said Absalom, If not, I pray thee, let my brother Amnon go with us. And the king said unto him, Why should he go with thee ?

But Absalom pressed him, that he let Amnon and all the king's sons go with him.

Now Absalom had commanded his servants, saying, Mark ye now when Amnon's heart

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heart is merry with wine, and when I say unto you, Smite Amnon, then kill him, fear not: have not I commanded you? be courageous, and be valiant.

And the servants of Absalom did unto Amnon, as Absalom had commanded: then all the king's sons arose, and every man gat him upon his mule, and fled.

And it came to pass while they were in the way, that tidings came to David, saying, Absalom hath slain all the king's sons, and there is not one of them left.

Then the king arose, and tare his garments, and lay on the earth; and all his servants stood by with their clothes rent.

And Jonadab the son of Shimeah David's brother, said, Let not my lord suppose that they have slain all the young men the king's sons; for Amnon only is dead: for by the appointment of Absalom this hath been determined.

Now therefore let not my lord the king take the thing to his heart, to think that all the king's sons are dead: for Amnon only is dead.

But Absalom fled. And the young man that kept the watch, lift up his eyes, and looked,

looked, and behold, there came much people by the way of the hill-side behind him.

And Jonadab said unto the king, Behold, the king's sons come: as thy servant said, so it is.

And it came to pass as soon as he had made an end of speaking, that behold, the king's sons came, and lift up their voice and wept: and the king also, and all his servants wept very sore.

But Absalom fled, and went to Talmai the son of Ammihud, king of Geshur: and David mourned for his son every day.

So Absalom fled, and went to Geshur, and was there three years.

And the soul of king David longed to go forth unto Absalom: for he was comforted concerning Amnon, seeing he was dead.

Now Joab the son of Zeruiah perceived that the king's heart was toward Absalom.

And he entreated the king. And the king said unto Joab, Go and bring the young man Absalom again.

And Joab fell to the ground on his face, and bowed himself, and thanked the king: and Joab said, To-day thy servant knoweth that

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that I have found grace in thy sight, my lord, O king, in that the king hath fulfilled the request of his servant.

ANNOTATIONS AND REFLECTIONS.

The prophecy of Nathan now began to be fulfilled upon David before his eyes: the sword was brought into his house, and not likely to depart from it. The sacred historian most pathetically describes David's distress on this afflicting occasion, by which he was deprived of two of his sons; for one was killed by the unnatural and barbarous command of his brother, and the murderer was obliged to flee away, in order to secure himself from public justice.

Abalom was actuated to the cruel deed, partly by resentment, and partly by ambition, for he aspired to the crown; and when Ammon was removed, he was the eldest son; for it was supposed that Chileab was dead, as no mention is made of him.

Abalom was the son of Maachah daughter of Talmi, king of Gethur; he therefore fled for protection to the dominions of his grandfather. How it came to pass that David made an alliance with a foreign princess, we are not informed; but it is supposed, that she was a proselyte to the Jewish religion. Had he observed the command of God given by Moses, that *the king should not multiply wives to himself*, he would, in all probability, have escaped a variety of sins, and consequently many misfortunes; but in those days it was the custom to have a great many; and as David
had

had no more than was usual, we may suppose he did not think he was wrong in this particular: but this part of David's conduct must be deferred for your future consideration.

Joab (either from affection, or to make his court to the king) invented an ingenious artifice in order to have Absalom recalled; but as it is not very material, I have omitted it for the present; the thing was managed with great ingenuity and address, and without doubt David was greatly pleased with it; but much as he longed to see Absalom, he restrained his wishes, lest he should be thought to countenance his sin.

Absalom, you find, was remarkable for his beauty and insinuating discourse; and therefore it is supposed, he made use of these advantages to gain popularity; and perhaps persuaded the people to think that he was fully justified in killing Ammon, and that his father was too rigid in banishing him his presence on that account.

Though Joab had taken such pains to prevail on David to suffer Absalom to come back to Jerusalem, he had too much policy to be very urgent for his return to court, because it was likely, that his own interest and influence might be lessened by it.

It was very mortifying to a vain young man to be detained in obscurity; and therefore, when Absalom found his messages were neglected, he determined to shew his resentment; his impetuosity prevailed, and he was once more permitted to see the king; what David felt on this occasion, is easier to imagine than describe.

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S E C T. XXVII.

ABSALOM FORMETH A CONSPIRACY, AND DE-
LUDETH THE PEOPLE.

AND it came to pass after this, that Absalom prepared him chariots, and horses, and fifty men to run before him.

And Absalom rose up early, and stood beside the way of the gate: and it was so, that when any man that had a controversy came to the king for judgment, then Absalom called unto him, and said, Of what city art thou? And he said, Thy servant is of one of the tribes of Israel.

And Absalom said unto him, See thy matters are good and right, but there is no man deputed of the king to hear thee.

Absalom said moreover, Oh that I were made judge in the land, that every man which hath any suit or cause, might come unto me, and I would do him justice.

And

And it was so, that when any man came nigh to him to do him obeisance, he put forth his hand, and took him and kissed him.

And on this manner did Absalom to all Israel that came to the king for judgment: so Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel.

And it came to pass after forty years, that Absalom said unto the king, I pray thee let me go and pay my vow, which I have vowed unto the LORD, in Hebron.

For thy servant vowed a vow while I abode at Geshur in Syria, saying, If the LORD shall bring me again, indeed to Jerusalem, then I will serve the LORD.

And the king said unto him, Go in peace. So he arose and went to Hebron.

But Absalom sent spies throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, As soon as ye hear the sound of the trumpet, then ye shall say, Absalom reigneth in Hebron.

And with Absalom went two hundred men out of Jerusalem, that were called, and they went in their simplicity, and they knew not any thing.

And

And Absalom sent for Abitophel the Gilonite, David's counsellor, from his city, even from Giloh, while he offered sacrifices : and the conspiracy was strong ; for the people increased continually with Absalom.

And there came a messenger to David, saying, 'The hearts of the men of Israel are after Absalom.

And David said unto all his servants that were with him at Jerusalem, Arise, and let us flee ; for we shall not else escape from Absalom : make speed to depart, lest he overtake us suddenly, and bring evil upon us, and smite the city with the edge of the sword.

And the king's servants said unto the king, Behold, thy servants are ready to do whatsoever my lord the king shall appoint.

And the king went forth, and all his household after him : and the king left ten women to keep the house.

And the king went forth, and all the people after him, and tarried in a place that was far off.

And all his servants passed on beside him : and all the Cherethites, and all the Pelethites, and all the Gittites, six hundred men
which

which came after him from Gath, passed on before the king.

Then said the king to Ittai the Gittite, Wherefore goest thou also with us? return to thy place, and abide with the king: for thou art a stranger, and also an exile.

Whereas thou camest but yesterday, should I this day make thee go up and down with us? seeing I go whither I may, return thou, and take back thy brethren: mercy and truth be with thee.

And Ittai answered the king, and said, As the LORD liveth, and as my lord the king liveth, surely in what place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or life, even there also will thy servant be.

And David said to Ittai, Go, and pass over. And Ittai the Gittite passed over and all his men, and all the little ones that were with him.

And all the country wept with a loud voice, and all the people passed over: the king also himself passed over the brook Kidron, and all the people passed over, toward the way of the wilderness.

And lo Zadok also, and all the Levites were with him, bearing the ark of the covenant

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nant of God, and they set down the ark of God; and Abiathar went up, until all the people had done passing out of the city.

And the king said unto Zadok, Carry back the ark of God into the city: if I shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again, and shew me both it, and his habitation.

But if he thus say, I have no delight in thee: behold, here am I, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him.

The king said also unto Zadok the priest, Art not thou a seer? return into the city in peace, and your two sons with you, Ahimaaz thy son, and Jonathan the son of Abiathar.

See, I will tarry in the plain of the wilderness, until there come word from you to certify me.

Zadok therefore and Abiathar carried the ark of God again to Jerusalem; and they tarried there.

ANNOTATIONS AND REFLECTIONS.

It is reasonable to think, that David as his sons grew up, gave each of them some patrimony; and perhaps Absalom's might be increased by presents from his grandfather,

grandfather, the king of Geshur; he was therefore determined to make a figure, and to have an equipage suitable to the king's eldest son; he had learnt how the princes of other nations were attended, and therefore was resolved to *multiply horses to himself*, instead of riding on a mule as his father did. David's tenderness, it seems, prevented his taking any measures to repress the pride of Absalom, or correct his folly, and therefore his next step was to steal the hearts of the people, by lamenting, that his power for redressing their grievances was not equal to his wishes. Nothing is easier, than for an artful person to prejudice the idle and ignorant part of a people against their governor, for they are apt to impute all the evils which are naturally attendant on the lower stations of life, to the oppression and injustice of those who have the administration of publick affairs; and to think the king in particular, accountable for every thing they suffer. It does not appear that David was at all remiss or negligent; on the contrary, he determined all great causes himself, and had appointed men of abilities and integrity to decide others: those persons therefore who listened to the wicked insinuations of his son, were very ungrateful.

David was struck with the utmost consternation, when he heard that Absalom had actually raised a conspiracy against him; and we may imagine, from his behaviour on this occasion, that the remembrance of his sin in respect to Uriah rushed full on his mind, and the threatening denounced by Nathan, that "*evil should rise against him out of his own house:*" he therefore called no counsel, but like a true penitent, humbly submitted to the *Supreme Being*. He had such a preference for

Jerusalem

Jerusalem on account of the ark, that he could not bear to make it a scene of blood, but resolved on a hasty flight, lest Absalom should come upon it suddenly.

Notwithstanding Absalom had drawn away so many, David had still some faithful friends left, who were determined to support him in every extremity.

It * is supposed that the Philistines had heard of Absalom's rebellion, and resolved to take that opportunity of freeing themselves from their subjection to Israel; and for that purpose drove out all those who favoured David's government, amongst whom were Ittai and his followers, whose arrival was very providential for David at this juncture; they were by birth Philistines of Gath, but it is imagined they were Jewish proselytes.

David would not presume to have the ark carried before him, when he was sensible he was suffering the chastisement of the LORD; and therefore sent back the priests, after having settled the means of carrying on a correspondence with them.

No wonder that the people wept at such an affecting sight, for the bare relation of it must raise painful emotions in the mind of every reader. Think, † my dear, that you behold a king, venerable for his years and victories, renowned for wisdom and piety, honoured as a prophet of the LORD, reduced to such distress; flying from a city which he had built and fortified, and seeking shelter in a desert, whilst a whole country loudly lamented his fate!

* Delany's Life of David. † Ibid.

S E C T. XXVIII.

DAVID ASCENDETH MOUNT OLIVET—AHITHOPHEL JOINETH WITH ABSALOM—HUSHAI FOLLOWETH DAVID.

AND David went up by the ascent of mount Olivet, and wept as he went up, and had his head covered, and he went bare-foot: and all the people that was with him, covered every man his head, and they went up, weeping as they went up.

And one told David, saying, Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom. And David said, O LORD, I pray thee, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness.

And it came to pass, that when David was come to the top of the mount, where he worshipped God, behold, Hushai the Archite came to meet him, with his coat rent, and earth upon his head?

Unto whom David said, If thou passest on with me, then thou shalt be a burden unto me.

But

DAVID'S AFFLICTION. 197

But if thou return to the city, and say unto Absalom, I will be thy servant, O king; as I have been thy father's servant hitherto, so will I now also be thy servant: then mayest thou for me defeat the counsel of Ahithophel.

And hast thou not there with thee Zadok and Abiathar the priests? therefore it shall be, that what thing soever thou shalt hear out of the king's house, thou shalt tell it to Zadok and Abiathar the priests.

Behold they have there with them their two sons, Ahimaaz Zadok's son, and Jonathan Abiathar's son: and by them ye shall send unto me every thing that ye can hear.

So Hushai David's friend came into the city, and Absalom came into Jerusalem.

ANNOTATIONS AND REFLECTIONS.

The noble ardour for which David used to be remarkable, was extinguished by sorrow; the bitterest arrows of affliction pierced his very soul; for what can equal the severe pangs which a tender parent feels, for a child's ingratitude? Fears to which he had hitherto been a stranger, tore his distracted mind.

198 DAVID'S LAMENTATION.

He did not however lose his hope and confidence in God, which were able to sustain him in the midst of these heavy distresses, as you may judge from the following words, uttered it is supposed when he ascended mount Olivet, or the mount of Olives, about a mile distant from Jerusalem.

KING DAVID'S LAMENTATION*.

LORD, how are they increased that trouble me? many are they that rise up against me.

Many there be which say of my soul, There is no help for him in God.

But thou, O LORD, art a shield for me; my glory, and the lifter up of mine head.

I cried unto the LORD with my voice, and he heard me out of his holy hill.

I laid me down and slept; I awaked, for the LORD sustained me.

I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people that have set themselves against me round about.

Arise, O LORD, save me, O my God; for thou hast smitten all mine enemies upon the cheek-bone: thou hast broken the teeth of the ungodly.

Hear my prayer, O LORD, give ear to my supplications: in thy faithfulness answer me, and in thy righteousness.

And enter not into judgment with thy servant: for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.

* Psalms iii. and cxliii.

DAVID'S APPREHENSION. 163

For the enemy hath persecuted my soul, he hath smitten my life down to the ground: he hath made me to dwell in darkness, as those that have been long dead.

Therefore is my spirit overwhelmed within me: my heart within me is desolate.

I remember the days of old, I meditate on all thy works: I muse on the work of thy hands.

I stretch forth my hands unto thee: my soul thirsteth after thee, as a thirsty land.

Hear me speedily, O LORD, my spirit faileth: hide not thy face from me, lest I be like unto them that go down into the pit.

Cause me to hear thy loving-kindness in the morning, for in thee do I trust: cause me to know the way wherein I should walk, for I lift up my soul unto thee.

Deliver me, O LORD, from mine enemies: I flee unto thee to hide me.

Teach me to do thy will, for thou art my GOD: thy Spirit is good, lead me into the land of uprightness.

Quicken me, O LORD, for thy name's sake: for thy righteousness' sake bring my soul out of trouble.

And of thy mercy cut off mine enemies, and destroy all them that afflict my soul: for I am thy servant.

When David heard that Ahithophel was in the conspiracy he was exceedingly alarmed, because he was acquainted with all his affairs; the king therefore prayed to God to defeat his counsels; and the following psalm, so applicable to his situation, is supposed to have been composed by David on this occasion.

KING DAVID'S PRAYER†.

Give ear to my prayer, O GOD: and hide not thyself from my supplication.

Attend unto me, and bear me: I mourn in my complaint, and make a noise;

Because of the voice of the enemy, because of the oppression of the wicked: for they cast iniquity upon me, and in wrath they hate me.

My heart is sore pained within me: and the terrors of death are fallen upon me.

Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me, and horror hath overwhelmed me.

And I said, O that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest,

Lo then would I wander far off, and remain in the wilderness.

I would hasten my escape from the windy storm and tempest.

Destroy, O LORD, and divide their tongues: for I have seen violence and strife in the city.

Day and night they go about it upon the walls thereof: mischief also and sorrow are in the midst of it.

Wickedness is in the midst thereof: deceit and guile depart not from her streets.

For it was not an enemy that reproached me, then I could have borne it; neither was it he that hated me, that did magnify himself against me, then I would have bid myself from him.

† Psalm lv.

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HUSHAI'S ARRIVAL. 201

But it was thou, a man, mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance.

We took sweet counsel together, and walked unto the house of God in company.

As for me, I will call upon GOD: and the LORD shall save me.

Evening and morning, and at noon will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice.

He hath delivered my soul in peace from the battle that was against me: for there were many with me.

GOD shall bear and afflict them, even he that abideth of old: because they have no changes, therefore they fear not GOD.

He hath put forth his hands against such as be at peace with him: he hath broken his covenant.

The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart: his words were softer than oil, yet were they drawn swords.

Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.

But thou, O GOD, shalt bring them down into the pit of destruction: bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days, but I will trust in thee.

The arrival of Hushai, David's friend at this critical juncture, must be considered as an instance of God's goodness: Hushai was an able counsellor, but no warrior; therefore, the only way in which he could be serviceable to David was, by defeating the counsel of Ahithophel, which was the most likely means of preventing the evils of a civil war, of preserving the life of David, and of keeping Absalom from proceeding to farther extremities.

S E C T. XXIX.

ZIBA BY DECEIT OBTAINETH THE INHERITANCE
OF HIS MASTER—SHEMEI CURSETH DAVID.

AND when David was a little past the top of the hill, behold, Ziba the servant of Mephibosheth met him with a couple of asses saddled, and upon them two hundred loaves of bread, and an hundred bunches of raisins, and an hundred of summer-fruits, and a bottle of wine.

And the king said unto Ziba, What meanest thou by these? And Ziba said, The asses be for the king's household to ride on, and the bread and summer-fruit for the young men to eat, and the wine, that such as be faint in the wilderness may drink.

And the king said, And where is thy master's son? And Ziba said to the king, Behold, he abideth at Jerusalem: for he said, To-day shall the house of Israel restore me the kingdom of my father.

Then

Then said the king to Ziba, Behold, thine are all that pertained unto Mephibosheth. And Ziba said, I humbly beseech thee that I may find grace in thy sight, my lord O king.

And when king David came to Bahurim, behold thence came out a man of the family of the house of Saul, whose name was Shimei the son of Gera; he came forth, and cursed still as he came.

And he cast stones at David, and at all the servants of king David: and all the people, and all the mighty men were on his right hand, and on his left.

And thus said Shimei when he cursed, Come out, come out thou bloody man, and thou man of Belial:

The LORD hath returned upon thee all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose stead thou hast reigned, and the LORD hath delivered the kingdom into the hand of Absalom thy son: and behold thou art taken in thy mischief, because thou art a bloody man.

Then said Abishai the son of Zeruiah unto the king, Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? let me go over I pray thee, and take off his head.

And the king said, What have I to do with you ye sons of Zeruiah? so let him curse, because the LORD hath said unto him, Curse David. Who shall then say, Wherefore hast thou done so?

And David said to Abishai, and to all his servants, Behold, my son, which came forth of my bowels, seeketh my life: how much more now may this Benjamite do it? let him alone, and let him curse: for the LORD hath bidden him.

It may be that the LORD will look on mine affliction, and that the LORD will requite me good for his cursing this day.

And as David and his men went by the way, Shimei went along on the hill side over against him, and cursed as he went, and threw stones at him, and cast dust.

And the king, and all the people that were with him, came weary, and refreshed themselves there.

ANNOTATIONS AND REFLECTIONS.

The refreshment which Ziba brought was very seasonable; for having fled with so much precipitation, it is likely David was but scantily supplied with provisions:

sions: he supposed it to be a present from Mephibosheth; but Ziba insinuated, that far from employing his thoughts about the king, Mephibosheth was contriving to bring about a revolution in his own favour; David's mind was so exceedingly hurt by his present distress, that he too readily gave ear to Ziba. If his own son was capable of acting so unnatural a part towards him, it was not at all incredible, that one of Saul's race should follow his example. In this instance David certainly acted wrong, for he should have enquired into the truth before he transferred Mephibosheth's estate to one who might be suspected to have slandered him for his own interest: but let us not too severely censure David, till we have been in such a trying situation ourselves; and in the mean while let us be instructed by his fault, to turn a deaf ear to the voice of flattery and defamation, and to condemn no one till we are sure that he deserves it.

Shimei's curses proceeded from the rancour of his own wicked heart, and we must not suppose that they were *inspired* by God. The meaning of David's expressions, "*let him curse, for the LORD hath bidden, &c.*" seems to be, that Shimei's reproaches reminding David of his blood-guiltiness in respect to Uriah, he regarded him as an instrument of punishment from the LORD, because God certainly could have stopped his wicked tongue, and restrained his insults; neither would Shimei have had an opportunity of treating David in that opprobrious manner, if he had not been reduced to such an abject state, which he justly considered as the chastisement of the LORD; because,

if

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if he had not committed such sins, he would have been secure on his throne, and happy in his family.

It is probable that Shimei's curses produced the following petition to God.

A PRAYER OF KING DAVID FOR HELP IN AFFLICTION *.

Uunto thee, O LORD, do I lift up my soul.

O my GOD, I trust in thee, let me not be ashamed : let not mine enemies triumph over me.

Yea, let none that wait on thee be ashamed ; let them be ashamed which transgress without cause.

Shew me thy ways, O LORD ; teach me thy paths.

Lead me in thy truth and teach me : for thou art the GOD of my salvation, on thee do I wait all the day.

Remember, O LORD, thy tender mercies, and thy loving-kindnesses : for they have been ever of old.

Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions : according to thy mercy remember thou me, for thy goodness sake, O LORD.

Good and upright is the LORD : therefore will he teach sinners in the way.

The meek will be guide in judgment : and the meek will be teach his way.

All the paths of the LORD are mercy and truth unto such as keep his covenant, and his testimonies.

For thy name's sake, O LORD, pardon mine iniquity : for it is great.

What man is he that feareth the LORD ? him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose.

* Psalm xxv.

His soul shall dwell at ease : and his seed shall inherit the earth.

The secret of the LORD is with them that fear him : and he will shew them his covenant.

Mine eyes are ever towards the LORD : for he shall pluck my feet out of the net.

Turn thee unto me, and have mercy upon me : for I am desolate and afflicted.

The troubles of my heart are enlarged : O bring thou me out of my distresses.

Look upon mine affliction, and my pain, and forgive all my sins.

Consider mine enemies, for they are many, and they hate me with cruel hatred.

O keep my soul and deliver me : let me not be ashamed, for I put my trust in thee.

Let integrity and uprightness preserve me : for I wait on thee.

Redeem Israel, O GOD, out of all his troubles.

S E C T. XXX.

AHITHOPHEL'S COUNSEL DEFEATED BY
HUSHAI—AHITHOPHEL HANGETH HIMSELF
—AMASA MADE GENERAL IN THE ROOM OF
JOAB.

AND Absalom and all the people the
men of Israel, came to Jerusalem,
and Ahithophel with him.

And it came to pass when Hushai the
Archite, David's friend, was come unto Ab-
salom, that Hushai said unto Absalom, God
save the king, God save the king.

And Absalom said to Hushai, is this thy
kindness to thy friend? why wentest thou
not with thy friend?

And Hushai said unto Absalom, Nay, but
whom the LORD and this people, and all the
men of Israel choose, his will I be, and with
him will I abide.

And again, Whom should I serve? should
I not serve in the presence of his son? as I
have served in thy father's presence, so will I
be in thy presence.

Then

Then said Absalom to Ahithophel, Give counsel among you what we shall do.

And the counsel of Ahithophel which he counselled in those days, was as if a man had enquired at the oracle of God: so was all the counsel of Ahithophel, both with David and with Absalom.

And Ahithophel said unto Absalom, Let me now choose out twelve thousand men, and I will arise and pursue after David this night.

And I will come upon him while he is weary and weak-handed, and will make him afraid: and all the people that are with him shall flee, and I will smite the king only.

And I will bring back all the people unto thee: the man whom thou seekest, is as if all returned: so all the people shall be in peace.

And the saying pleased Absalom well, and all the elders of Israel.

Then said Absalom, Call now Hushai the Archite also, and let us hear likewise what he saith.

And when Hushai was come to Absalom, Absalom spake unto him, saying, Ahithophel hath

hath spoken after this manner: shall we do after his saying? if not, speak thou.

And Hushai said unto Absalom, The counsel that Ahithophel hath given, is not good at this time.

For (said Hushai) thou knowest thy father and his men, that they be mighty men, and they be chafed in their minds, as a bear robbed of her whelps in the field: and thy father is a man of war, and will not lodge with the people.

Behold, he is hid now in some pit, or in some other place: and it will come to pass, when some of them be overthrown at the first, that whosoever heareth it, will say, There is a slaughter among the people that follow Absalom.

And he also that is valiant, whose heart is as the heart of a lion, shall utterly melt: for all Israel knoweth that thy father is a mighty man, and they which be with him are valiant men.

Therefore I counsel, that all Israel be generally gathered unto thee, from Dan even to Beer-sheba, as the sand that is by the sea for multitude, and that thou go to battle in thine own person.

So

So shall we come upon him in some place where he shall be found, and we will light upon him as the dew falleth on the ground: and of him, and of all the men that are with him, there shall not be left so much as one.

Moreover, if he be gotten into a city, then shall all Israel bring ropes to that city, and we will draw it into the river, until there be not one small stone found there.

And Absalom and all the men of Israel said, The counsel of Hushai the Archite is better than the counsel of Ahithophel: for the LORD had appointed to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel, to the intent that the LORD might bring evil upon Absalom.

Then said Hushai unto Zadok and to Abiathar the priests, Thus and thus did Ahithophel counsel Absalom and the elders of Israel; and thus and thus have I counselled.

Now therefore send quickly, and tell David, saying, Lodge not this night in the plains of the wilderness, but speedily pass over: lest the king be swallowed up, and all the people that are with him.

Now Jonathan and Ahimaaz stayed by En-rogel, (for they might not be seen to come

come into the city) And a wench went and told them: and they went and told king David.

Nevertheless, a lad saw them, and told Absalom: but they went both of them away quickly, and came to a man's house in Bahurim, which had a well in his court, whither they went down.

And the woman took and spread a covering over the well's mouth, and spread ground corn thereon: and the thing was not known.

And when Absalom's servants came to the woman to the house, they said, Where is Ahimaaz and Jonathan? and the woman said unto them, They be gone over the brook of water. And when they had sought and could not find them, they returned to Jerusalem.

And it came to pass after they were departed, that they came up out of the well, and went and told king David, and said unto David, Arise and pass quickly over the water: for thus hath Ahithophel counselled against you.

Then David arose, and all the people that were with him, and they passed over Jordan:

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by the morning light there lacked not one of them that was not gone over Jordan.

And when Ahithophel saw that his counsel was not followed, he saddled his ass, and arose, and gat him home to his house, to his city, and put his household in order, and hanged himself, and died, and was buried in the sepulchre of his father.

Then David came to Mahanaim: and Absalom passed over Jordan, he and all the men of Israel with him.

And Absalom made Amasa captain of the host instead of Joab.

So Israel and Absalom pitched in the land of Gilead.

ANNOTATIONS AND REFLECTIONS.

David imagined that Absalom would make haste to Jerusalem, and so it proved: it seems, he arrived there a considerable time before the king and his followers reached the banks of the river Jordan; for when Hushai came to the city, he found Absalom in quiet possession, and just going to call a counsel. Absalom supposing Hushai to be inviolably attached to David, was amazed at being accosted by him; but on Hushai's assuring him "*that whom the LORD and all the men of Israel should chuse, his would he be,*" he immediately resolved to repose intire confidence in him.

Hushai

Hushai in this instance was not perfectly sincere; but we must consider, that he had no other possible way of defeating the counsels of Ahithophel; and if a *departure from truth*, can in any instance be *justified*, surely it is in such a case as this, where it was evidently practised to *prevent a man from murdering his FATHER and his KING*.

The advice which Ahithophel gave, though exceedingly wicked, was very likely to succeed in getting the king into his power; but in mercy to David, the LORD ordained that Hushai's counsel should prevail. The object Hushai seems to have had in view, was, to gain time, in order to concert proper measures for preventing bloodshed, and restoring the peace of the nation.

When David, in consequence of Hushai's advice, had passed the river Jordan, he is supposed to have composed the following psalm:

A PRAYER OF KING DAVID'S, EXPRESSIVE OF
CONFIDENCE IN GOD*.

In thee, O LORD; do I put my trust, let me never be put to confusion.

Deliver me in thy righteousness, and cause me to escape: incline thine ear unto me, and save me.

Be thou my strong habitation, whercunto I may continually resort: thou hast given commandment to save me, for thou art my rock and my fortress.

Deliver me, O my God, out of the hand of the wicked, out of the hand of the unrighteous and cruel man.

* Psalm lxxi.

For thou art my hope, O LORD GOD: thou art my trust from my youth.

I am as a wonder unto many; but thou art my strong refuge.

Let my mouth be filled with thy praise, and with thy honour all the day.

Cast me not off in the time of old age, forsake me not when my strength faileth.

For mine enemies speak against me; and they that lay wait for my soul, take counsel together,

Saying, God hath forsaken him: persecute and take him, for there is none to deliver him.

O GOD, be not far from me: O my GOD, make haste for my help.

But I will hope continually, and will yet praise thee more and more.

My mouth shall shew forth thy righteousness, and thy salvation all the day: for I know not the numbers thereof.

I will go in the strength of the LORD GOD: I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only.

O GOD, thou hast taught me from my youth: and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works.

Now also when I am old and gray-headed, O GOD, forsake me not; until I have shewed thy strength unto this generation, and thy power to every one that is to come.

Thy righteousness also, O GOD, is very high, who hast done great things: O GOD, who is like unto thee?

Thou which hast shewed me great and sore troubles, shalt quicken me again, and shall bring me up again from the depths of the earth.

Thou shalt increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side.

I will

For

*I will also praise thee with the psaltery, even thy truth,
O my God: unto thee will I sing with the harp, O thou
holy One of Israel.*

*My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing unto thee: and
my soul which thou hast redeemed.*

*My tongue also shall talk of thy righteousness all the day
long: for they are confounded, for they are brought unto
shame, that seek my hurt.*

Great as David's distresses were at present, he had been redeemed from a greater, *the fear of God's perpetual anger for his heinous sins*; his repentance had been accepted, and forgiveness promised. He knew that the LORD was also able to remove the punishment he suffered, and the HOLY SPIRIT gave him assurance, that when the purposes of *his reformation and the edification of the world*, were answered by his chastisement, he should again rejoice before the LORD.

No one deserved death more than Ahithophel; and despair, which generally succeeds the disappointment of wicked plots, suggested the desperate deed of putting an end to his own LIFE. When David heard that Ahithophel his most formidable enemy was dead, it was natural for his heart to rejoice; and the following psalm seems particularly adapted to this occasion, because it is likely that being at Mahanaim, he recollected the deliverance of his forefather Jacob from the hand of Esau, and was encouraged to hope, that prayer and penitence would induce the LORD to deliver him also from the pursuit of his cruel son.

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A THANKSGIVING OF KING DAVID FOR HIS
PRESERVATION, AND THE COMFORT OF THE
HOLY SPIRIT.

*I will bless the LORD at all times: his praise shall
continually be in my mouth.*

*My soul shall make her boast in the LORD: the humble
shall hear thereof, and be glad.*

*O magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his
name together.*

*I fought the LORD, and he heard me, and delivered me
from all my fears.*

*They looked unto him, and were lightened: and their
faces were not ashamed.*

*This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him; and
saved him out of all his troubles.*

*The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that
fear him, and delivereth them.*

*O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the
man that trusteth in him.*

*O fear the LORD, ye his saints: for there is no want
to them that fear him.*

*The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they
that seek the LORD shall not want any good thing.*

*Come ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you
the fear of the LORD.*

*What man is he that desireth life, and loveth many
days, that he may see good?*

*Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking
guile.*

Depart from evil, and do good: seek peace and pursue it.

218 DAVID'S THANKSGIVING.

The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry.

The face of the LORD is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.

The righteous cry, and the LORD heareth and delivereth them out of all their troubles.

The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart: and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.

Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all.

He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken.

Evil shall slay the wicked: and they that hate the righteous shall be desolate.

The LORD redeemeth the soul of his servants: and none of them that trust in him shall be desolate.

SECT.

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S E C T. XXXI.

SHOBI, MACHIR, AND BARZILLAI, BRING
 SUCCOUR TO THE KING—DAVID VIEWING HIS
 ARMY, GIVETH THEM CHARGE CONCERNING
 ABSALOM—THE ISRAELITES SMITTEN—
 ABSALOM HANGED IN AN OAK—THE KING
 MOURNETH FOR ABSALOM.

AND it came to pass when David was
 come to Mahanaim, that Shobi the
 son of Nahash of Rabbah of the children of
 Ammon, and Machir the son of Ammiel of
 Lo-debar, and Barzillai the Gileadite of Ro-
 gelim,

Brought beds, and basons, and earthen
 vessels, and wheat and barley, and flour,
 and parched corn, and beans, and lentiles,
 and parched pulse.

And honey, and butter, and sheep, and
 cheese of kine for David, and for the people
 that were with him to eat; for they said,
 the people is hungry, and weary, and
 thirsty in the wilderness.

And David numbered the people that were with him, and set captains of thousands, and captains of hundreds over them.

And David sent forth a third part of the people under the hand of Joab, and a third part under the hand of Abishai the son of Zeruiah Joab's brother, and a third part under the hand of Ittai the Gittite: and the king said unto the people, I will surely go forth with you myself also.

But the people answered, Thou shalt not go forth: for if we flee away, they will not care for us; neither if half of us die, will they care for us: but now thou art worth ten thousand of us, therefore now it is better that thou succour us out of the city.

And the king said unto them, What seemeth you best, I will do. And the king stood by the gate-side, and all the people came out by hundreds, and by thousands.

And the king commanded Joab, and Abishai, and Ittai, saying, Deal gently for my sake with the young man, even with Absalom. And all the people heard when the king gave all the captains charge concerning Absalom.

So

So the people went out into the field against Israel: and the battle was in the wood of Ephraim.

Where the people of Israel were slain before the servants of David, and there was there a great slaughter that day of twenty thousand men.

For the battle was there scattered over the face of all the country; and the wood devoured more people that day, than the sword devoured.

And Absalom met the servants of David; and Absalom rode upon a mule, and the mule went under the thick boughs of a great oak, and his head caught hold of the oak, and he was taken up between the heaven and the earth, and the mule that was under him went away.

And a certain man saw it, and told Joab, and said, Behold, I saw Absalom hanged in an oak.

And Joab said unto the man that told him, And behold, thou sawest him, and why didst thou not smite him there to the ground, and I would have given thee ten shekels of silver, and a girdle?

And the man said unto Joab, Though I should receive a thousand shekels of silver in mine hand, yet would I not put forth mine hand against the king's son: for in our hearing the king charged thee, and Abishai, and Ittai, saying, Beware that none touch the young man Absalom.

Otherwise, I should have wrought falsehood against mine own life: for there is no matter hid from the king, and thou thy self wouldest have set thyself against me.

Then said Joab, I may not tarry thus with thee. And he took three darts in his hand, and thrust them through the heart of Absalom, while he was yet alive in the midst of the oak.

And ten young men that bare Joab's armour, compassed about and smote Absalom, and slew him.

And Joab blew the trumpet, and the people returned from pursuing after Israel: for Joab held back the people.

And they took Absalom, and cast him into a great pit in the wood, and laid a very great heap of stones upon him: and all Israel fled every one to his tent.

Now

Now Absalom in his life-time had taken and reared up for himself a pillar, which is in the king's dale: for he said I have no son to keep my name in remembrance: and he called the pillar after his own name, and it is called unto this day, Absalom's place.

Then said Ahimaaz the son of Zadok, Let me now run, and bear the king tidings, how that the LORD hath avenged him of his enemies.

And Joab said unto him, thou shalt not bear tidings this day, but thou shalt bear tidings another day: but this day thou shalt bear no tidings, because the king's son is dead.

Then said Joab to Cushi, Go tell the king what thou hast seen. And Cushi bowed himself unto Joab, and ran.

Then said Ahimaaz the son of Zadok yet again to Joab, But howsoever, let me, I pray thee, also run after Cushi. And Joab said, Wherefore wilt thou run, my son, seeing that thou hast no tidings ready?

But howsoever (said he) let me run. And he said unto him, Run. Then Ahimaaz ran by the way of the plain, and overran Cushi.

And David sat between the two gates: and the watchman went up to the roof over the gate unto the wall, and lift up his eyes, and looked, and behold a man running alone.

And the watchman cried, and told the king. And the king said, If he be alone, there is tidings in his mouth. And he came apace, and drew near.

And the watchman saw another man running, and the watchman called unto the porter, and said, Behold, another man running alone. And the king said, He also bringeth tidings.

And the watchman said, Methinketh the running of the foremost, is like the running of Ahimaaz the son of Zadok. And the king said, He is a good man, and cometh with good tidings.

And Ahimaaz called, and said unto the king, All is well. And he fell down to the earth upon his face before the king, and said, Blessed be the LORD thy GOD, which hath delivered up the men that lift up their hand against my LORD the king.

And the king said, Is the young man Abalom safe? And Ahimaaz answered, When Joab sent the king's servant, and me thy servant,

vant, I saw a great tumult, but I knew not what it was.

And the king said unto him, Turn aside, and stand here. And he turned aside and stood still.

And behold, Cushy came, and Cushy said, Tidings, my lord the king: for the LORD hath avenged thee this day of all them that rose up against thee.

And the king said unto Cushy, Is the young man Absalom safe? And Cushy answered, The enemies of my lord the king, and all that rise against thee to do thee hurt, be as that young man is.

And the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept: and as he went, thus he said, O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom: would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son.

ANNOTATIONS AND REFLECTIONS.

David experienced the happy effects of his faith and piety; for it pleased God to encourage many faithful subjects and brave soldiers to espouse his cause, and they resorted to him from all quarters, so that in a few

226 DAVID'S FORCES DIVIDED.

days he had a powerful army to resist Absalom and his rebellious followers. Provisions also were brought to him in abundance, by persons of the greatest distinction throughout all the regions round about.

Shobi was that son of Nahash, who I told you, is supposed to have been made viceroy of Rabbah by David. Machir was the person who had maintained Mephibosheth; he seems to have been a man of a most benevolent disposition, ready at all times to succour merit in distress. Barzillai was a worthy man, who also knew the best use to which riches can be applied.

As Absalom was bent on his impious scheme of establishing himself on the throne by the murder of his venerable parent, David was under a necessity of using means for his own security: he could not sacrifice his friends to the impetuous rage of a head-strong young man; neither could he, consistently with honour and religion, desert the throne to which he had been raised by the immediate appointment of God, and the universal consent of the people. He was the LORD's *anointed*, and as such, he bore the sword of justice, with which it was his duty to chastize sedition and rebellion, even in the person of his own son. He therefore numbered the people, divided his forces, which are supposed to have amounted to 4000 men, and finding that his army was sufficiently strong, resolved to assault the enemy; but unwilling to spill the blood of his subjects, or draw his sword against a rebellious son, he yielded to the entreaties of his servants, and did not go forth with his troops. There is no doubt but that the pious king seized this opportunity of intreating the

LORD

LORD to compleat his deliverance, for his psalms abound with sentiments adapted to such an occasion.

The excessive tenderness which David expressed for Absalom shewed his character in the most amiable light; he was willing to impute his rashness to youth and inexperience, therefore intreated his generals and captains to spare Absalom for his sake, hoping that he would reform.

Notwithstanding the superiority of the rebel army, and the restraint which David's kind commands in favour of Absalom had laid upon his party, this wicked son could not escape the punishment due to such unparalleled crimes; the justice of God overtook him, and his hair, which had been his ornament and pride, became instrumental to his destruction: he was consigned by God to that very punishment, to which the law condemned traitors and parricides.

Joab was of a very impetuous temper, and knowing the good consequences that were likely to ensue, notwithstanding the king's commands to the contrary, determined to pierce the rebellious heart of this unnatural son; and the soldiers finding that Absalom was dead, shewed their detestation of his crime, by throwing stones on his carcase.

Whilst the two armies were engaged, the poor king sat in the gate, equally dreading a victory or defeat; at length Ahimaaz and Cushi were discovered by the watchman; David flattered himself that their intelligence was of the most pleasing kind, and you find that Ahimaaz evaded telling him immediately of the death of Absalom; but when Cushi arrived, David's fears were confirmed: his lamentation needs no comment:

228 DAVID'S LAMENTATION.

it is impossible for any words to be more expressive of the grief of a tender parent, for the untimely death of a wicked son, who was cut off in the midst of his sinful course. *O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom, would to God I had died for thee, O Absalom my son, my son!*

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S E C T. XXXII.

JOAB REPROVETH THE KING—DAVID CEASETH
TO MOURN FOR ABSALOM—THE TRIBES ARE
URGENT TO BRING HIM BACK TO JERUSALEM.

AND it was told Joab, Behold the king
weepeth and mourneth for Absalom.

And the victory that day was turned into
mourning unto all the people: for the peo-
ple heard say that day, how the king was
grieved for his son.

And the people gat them by stealth that
day into the city, as people being ashamed
steal away when they flee in battle.

But the king covered his face, and the
king cried with a loud voice, O my son Ab-
salom, O Absalom my son, my son.

And Joab came into the house to the
king, and said, Thou hast shamed this day
the faces of all thy servants, which this day
have saved thy life, and the lives of thy sons,
and of thy daughters, and the lives of thy
wives, and the lives of thy concubines:

In

In that thou lovest thine enemies and hatest thy friends; for thou hast declared this day, that thou regardest neither princes, nor servants; for this day I perceive, that if Absalom had lived, and all we had died this day, then it had pleased thee well.

Now therefore arise, go forth, and speak comfortably unto thy servants: for I swear by the LORD, if thou go not forth, there will not tarry one with thee this night; and that will be worse unto thee than all the evil that befell thee from thy youth until now.

Then the king rose, and sat in the gate: and they told unto all the people, saying, Behold, the king doth sit in the gate: and all the people came before the king: for Israel had fled every man to his tent.

And all the people were at strife throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, The king saved us out of the hand of our enemies, and he delivered us out of the hand of the Philistines, and now he is fled out of the land for Absalom.

And Absalom whom we anointed over us, is dead in battle: now therefore why speak ye not a word of bringing the king back?

And

And king David sent to Zadok and to Abiathar the priests, saying, Speak unto the elders of Judah, saying, Why are ye the last to bring the king back to his house? (seeing the speech of all Israel is come to the king, even to his house.)

Ye are my brethren, ye are my bones and my flesh : wherefore then are ye the last to bring back the king?

And say ye to Amasa, Art thou not of my bone, and of my flesh? God do so to me and more also, if thou be not captain of the host before me continually in the room of Joab.

And he bowed the heart of all the men of Judah, even as the heart of one man, so that they sent this word unto the king, Return thou and all thy servants.

So the king returned, and came to Jordan : and Judah came to Gilgal, to go to meet the king, to conduct the king over Jordan.

ANNOTATIONS AND REFLECTIONS.

When the people of Israel perceived that the king gave way to immoderate grief for the death of Abshalom, and seemed insensible of their good offices ; instead
of

232 DAVID'S OFFER TO AMASA.

of rejoicing in their victory, they retired to their houses disappointed and silent. Joab, who knew that if David abandoned himself to sorrow in this manner, and the ardour of the people was suffered to abate, many bad consequences might ensue, resolved to expostulate with him; and had he done this with tenderness and delicacy, he would have acted a prudent and friendly part; but he had a heart steeled to all the delicate feelings of humanity, and therefore could make no allowance for one whose mind was habituated to the tenderest sensibility. Nothing could be more insolent than Joab's address to his sovereign; however, it was not a time for David to express displeasure, and he immediately acquiesced with his desire.

David had many friends amongst the tribes of Israel, who as soon as they heard that Absalom was dead, endeavoured to persuade the rest to return to their duty; which they did, with as much eager zeal, as they had a short time before rushed into rebellion; their only contention was, which tribe should most signalize their loyalty and affection. Amasa was the commander of the tribe of Judah, and as they had under him taken such a distinguished part against David, they were apprehensive of his resentment; but as he longed for peace, he prudently resolved to win them by mildness, in which you find he happily succeeded. We cannot be surprized at the offer which David made to Amasa, when we reflect on the arrogant and contemptuous treatment Jacob had given him; and when we likewise consider, that he could not have regained possession of Jerusalem without besieging it, if the tribe of Judah had continued to resist him. It is true,

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true, that Joab had hitherto adhered to David's interest; but he had dared to kill the king's son contrary to his express command, when he might have taken him prisoner; and had lately threatened David with a fresh rebellion, unless he acted intirely by his direction; so that it was highly necessary to remove him, and no one was so proper to succeed as Amasa.

David had now the happy prospect of being restored to the peaceable possession of the throne of Israel; and what was still more desirable, he had the comfortable assurance, that he should again present himself before the LORD in his holy tabernacle.

KING DAVID'S MEDITATIONS AS HE ADVANCED TOWARDS THE HOLY CITY.

Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the LORD.

Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart.

O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes:

I will keep thy statutes: O forsake me not utterly.

I will meditate in thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways.

I have gone astray like a lost sheep: seek thy servant: for I do not forget thy commandments.

Great are thy tender mercies, O LORD: quicken me according to thy judgments.

Consider how I love thy precepts: quicken me O LORD, according to thy loving-kindness.

I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word.

Remove

234 DAVID'S MEDITATIONS.

Remove from me reproach and contempt : for I have kept thy testimonies.

I have chosen the way of truth : thy judgments have I laid before me.

Let thy mercies come also unto me, O LORD, even thy salvation, according to thy word.

So shall I have wherewith to answer him that reproacheth me : for I trust in thy word.

This is my comfort in my affliction : for thy word hath quickened me.

The proud have had me greatly in derision : yet have I not declined from thy law.

I remembered thy judgments of old, O LORD : and have comforted myself.

Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage.

I entreated thy favour with my whole heart : be merciful unto me according to thy word.

I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies.

I made haste and delayed not to keep thy commandments.

Thou hast dealt well with thy servant, O LORD, according unto thy word.

Before I was afflicted I went astray : but now have I kept thy word.

It is good for me that I have been afflicted : that I might learn thy statutes.

They that fear thee, will be glad when they see me ; because I have hoped in thy word.

Let those that fear thee turn unto me, and those that have known thy testimonies.

O how

DAVID'S MEDITATIONS. 235

O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day.
How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter
than honey to my mouth.

Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my
path.

Accept, I beseech thee, the free-will offerings of my
mouth, O LORD, and teach me thy judgments.

Mine eyes fail for thy salvation, and for the word of
thy righteousness.

Order my steps in thy word: and let not any iniquity
have dominion over me.

I prevented the dawning of the morning, and cried: I
hoped in thy word.

Mine eyes prevent the night-watches, that I might
meditate in thy word.

Seven times a day do I praise thee: because of thy
righteous judgments.

Great peace have they which love thy law: and no-
thing shall offend them.

Unless thy law had been my delight, I should then
have perished in mine affliction.

Thy word is true from the beginning: and every one of
thy righteous judgments endureth for ever*.

* Psalm cxix. seems to me entirely composed of such sentiments
as must naturally have arisen in David's mind during his absence
from Jerusalem, and on the prospect of his return to it. I have
therefore ventured, without the authority of the learned, to apply
some parts to this occasion. The whole might have been introduced
with advantage; but I am obliged, in the course of this work, to
reject many noble passages to avoid being too voluminous: the
beauties of SCRIPTURE are not easily collected.

SECT.

S E C T. XXXIII.

SHIMEI PARDONED—THE KING GOETH OVER
JORDAN.

AND Shimei the son of Gera, a Benja-
mite, which was of Bahurim, hasted,
and came down with the men of Judah, to
meet king David.

And there were a thousand men of Ben-
jamin with him, and Ziba the servant of the
house of Saul, and his fifteen sons and his
twenty servants with him, and they went
over Jordan before the king.

And there went over a ferry-boat to carry
over the king's household, and to do what he
thought good: and Shimei the son of Gera
fell down before the king as he was come
over Jordan;

And said unto the king, Let not my lord
impute iniquity unto me, neither do thou
remember that which thy servant did per-
versly the day that my lord the king went

out

out of Jerusalem, that the king should take it to his heart.

For thy servant doth know that I have sinned: therefore behold, I am come the first this day of all the house of Joseph, to go down to meet my lord the king.

But Abishai the son of Zeruiah answered and said, Shall not Shimei be put to death for this, because he cursed the LORD's anointed?

And David said, What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah, that ye should this day be adversaries unto me? shall there any man be put to death this day in Israel? for do not I know, that I am this day king over Israel?

Therefore the king said unto Shimei, Thou shalt not die: and the king sware unto him.

And Barzillai the Gileadite came down from Rogelim, and went over Jordan with the king, to conduct him over Jordan.

Now Barzillai was a very aged man, even fourscore years old, and he had provided the king of sustenance while he lay at Mahanaim: for he was a very great man.

And

And the king said unto Barzillai, Come thou over with me, and I will feed thee with me in Jerusalem.

And Barzillai said unto the king, How long have I to live, that I should go up with the king unto Jerusalem?

I am this day fourscore years old: and can I discern between good and evil? can thy servant taste what I eat or what I drink? can I hear any more the voice of singing-men and singing-women? wherefore then should thy servant, be yet a burden unto my lord the king?

Thy servant will go a little way over Jordan with the king: and why should the king recompense it me with such a reward?

Let thy servant, I pray thee, turn back again, that I may die in mine own city, and be buried by the grave of my father, and of my mother: but behold thy servant Chimham, let him go over with my lord the king, and do to him what shall seem good unto thee.

And the king answered, Chimham shall go over with me, and I will do to him that which shall seem good unto thee: and what-
foever

foever thou shalt require of me, that will I do for thee.

And all the people went over Jordan : and when the king was come over, the king kissed Barzillai, and blessed him ; and he returned unto his own place.

Then the king went on to Gilgal, and Chimham went on with him : and all the people of Judah conducted the king, and also half the people of Israel.

ANNOTATIONS AND REFLECTIONS.

The manner in which David acted towards Shimei, reflects great honour on his memory : had not his character for humanity and gentleness of manners been generally known, it cannot be supposed, that one who had so vilely insulted him in the day of distress, would have ventured to cast himself upon his mercy. The king was resolved not to interrupt the joy of reconciliation with his people by shedding the blood of a reviler, whose reproaches, though undeserved, had contributed to bring his mind into that humble state which had made his prayers acceptable to the LORD.

Barzillai was a faithful subject, and his sovereign was not insensible to his merit. This was a happy day to David ; for he had opportunities of exercising his mercy, benevolence, and gratitude.

S E C T. XXXIV.

A CONTEST BETWEEN THE TRIBES—A REBELLION ENSUES.

AND behold, all the men of Israel came to the king, and said unto the king, Why have our brethren, the men of Judah, stolen thee away, and have brought the king and his household, and all David's men with him over Jordan?

And all the men of Judah answered the men of Israel, Because the king is near of kin to us: wherefore then be ye angry for this matter? have we eaten at all of the king's cost? or hath he given us any gift?

And the men of Israel answered the men of Judah, and said, We have ten parts in the king, and we have also more right in David than ye: why then did ye despise us, that our advice should not be first had in bringing back our king? And the words of the

the men of Judah were fiercer than the words of the men of Israel.

And there happened to be there a man of Belial, whose name was Sheba, the son of Bichri, a Benjamite, and he blew a trumpet, and said, We have no part in David, neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: every man to his tents, O Israel.

So every man of Israel went up from after David, and followed Sheba the son of Bichri: but the men of Judah clave unto their king, from Jordan even to Jerusalem.

ANNOTATIONS AND REFLECTIONS.

It is very easy to raise commotions in a state, but hard to quell them; for when fellow-subjects have been used to regard each other as enemies, animosities break out on every trifling occasion; as was the case in the present instance. Perhaps David was impolitic in sending to the men of Judah; but as it was his own tribe, we can scarcely wonder that he was solicitous for their countenancing him on this occasion; neither was it safe for him to go to Jerusalem, till he had their assurance that they would yield him quiet possession of it; when he knew that the gates of the city would be opened to him, he began his march, never supposing that the other tribes would expect a particular invitation; however, pride and jealousy made them suspect him of partiality.

partiality to Judah; and the imprudent haughty answer which this tribe returned to their remonstrances, blew up the flame. Sheba being a Benjamite, had a personal hatred to David, on account of his having been appointed by God to supersede Saul's family; he therefore took advantage of the present dispute, with a view to his own interest.

The joy which David would otherwise have felt at his return to Jerusalem, was greatly damped by these fresh contentions; but he still trusted in the LORD.

When he entered the city, Mephibosheth met him with all the appearance of forlorn distress, both in his dress and person: his answer to the king's enquiry, why he had not attended him? implied, that it was his wish to have done so; but David's reply gives us reason to suppose that he did not believe him sincere; though for the sake of Jonathan, he was contented to pass the matter over without a scrutiny, which he feared might end in the disgrace of Mephibosheth. Ziba had done the king very acceptable services, and his story was a probable one; if Mephibosheth was able to ride, surely he might have followed, and prevented credit being given to it; therefore we cannot wonder, that David did not readily give ear to his excuses, for after the benefits he had conferred on Mephibosheth, he must have been greatly hurt at such an appearance of ingratitude and inattention to his distress. I must own to you, my dear, that I am unable to decide *which* deserved blame, Mephibosheth or Ziba; but have so good an opinion of David, that I am persuaded he conducted himself in this affair, according to the rules of integrity and honour.

S E C T.

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S E C T. XXXV.

AMASA MADE GENERAL BY DAVID—SLAIN BY
JOAB—JOAB PURSUES SHEBA—A WISE WO-
MAN SAVETH THE CITY OF ABEL.

AND David came to his house at Je-
rusalem. Then said the king to A-
masa, Assemble me the men of Judah within
three days, and be thou here present.

So Amasa went to assemble the men of
Judah; but he tarried longer than the set
time which he had appointed him.

And David said to Abishai, Now shall
Sheba the son of Bichri do us more harm
than did Absalom: take thou thy lord's
servants, and pursue after him, lest he get
him fenced cities, and escape us.

And there went out after him Joab's men,
and the Cherethites, and the Pelethites, and
all the mighty men: and they went out of
Jerusalem, to pursue after Sheba the son of
Bichri.

When they were at the great stone which is in Gibeon, Amasa went before them: and Joab's garment that he had put on, was girded unto him, and upon it a girdle with a sword fastened upon his loins in the sheath thereof, and as he went forth it fell out.

And Joab said to Amasa, Art thou in health, my brother? and Joab took Amasa by the beard with the right hand to kiss him.

But Amasa took no heed to the sword that was in Joab's hand: so he smote him therewith in the fifth rib, and shed out his bowels to the ground, and struck him not again, and he died: so Joab and Abishai his brother pursued after Sheba the son of Bichri.

And one of Joab's men stood by him, and said, He that favoureth Joab, and he that is for David, let him go after Joab.

And Amasa wallowed in blood in the midst of the high-way: and when the man saw that all the people stood still, he removed Amasa out of the high-way into the field, and cast a cloth upon him, when he saw that every one that came by him, stood still.

When he was removed out of the high-way, all the people went on after Joab, to pursue after Sheba the son of Bichri.

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And he went through all the tribes of Israel unto Abel, and to Beth-maachah, and all the Berites: and they were gathered together and went also after him.

And they came and besieged him in Abel of Beth-maachah, and they cast up a bank against the city, and it stood in the trench; and all the people that were with Joab, battered the wall to throw it down.

Then cried a wise woman out of the city, Hear, hear; say, I pray you, unto Joab, come near hither, that I may speak with thee.

And when he was come near unto her, the woman said, Art thou Joab? And he answered, I am he. Then she said unto him, Hear the words of thine handmaid. And he answered, I do hear.

Then she spake, saying, They were wont to speak in old times, saying, They shall surely ask counsel at Abel: and so they ended the matter.

I am one of them that are peaceable and faithful in Israel; thou seekest to destroy a city and a mother in Israel: why wilt thou swallow up the inheritance of the LORD?

And Joab answered and said, Far be it, far be it from me, that I should swallow up or destroy.

The matter is not so: but a man of mount Ephraim (Sheba the son of Bichri by name) hath lift up his hand against the king, even against David: deliver him only, and I will depart from the city. And the woman said unto Joab, Behold, his head shall be thrown to thee over the wall.

Then the woman went unto all the people in her wisdom, and they cut off the head of Sheba the son of Bichri, and cast it out to Joab: and he blew a trumpet, and they retired from the city, every man to his tent: and Joab returned to Jerusalem unto the king.

ANNOTATIONS AND REFLECTIONS.

We find that David was resolved to remove Joab from the supreme command of the army, agreeably to his promise to Amasa, for his insolence was insupportable. Amasa not being able to make such quick dispatch as the case required, David was greatly disquieted, which made him send Abishai, with the Cherithites, &c. who met with Amasa.

Joab it is supposed joined them, with a determined resolution to put Amasa to death, and retain the command

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mand of the army in defiance of the king: when he had perpetrated this wicked act, he professed himself in David's interest; and as there was an absolute necessity to go against the rebels, the people without hesitation followed him. Just as the troops, by Joab's command, were beginning to besiege the city with the usual engines, a wise woman requested them to desist, till she had made a proposal to the general.

The arguments she used, were persuasive and powerful; though according to our translation, they are in a great measure unintelligible to us; but it plainly appears, that she meant to expostulate with Joab for not first offering terms of peace, before he proceeded to the destruction of a city which was part of the LORD's inheritance; assuring him, that had he informed them of the cause, the inhabitants would soon have ended the matter, by complying with any reasonable demands; and when she found they were in pursuit of Sheba, she promised he should immediately be put to death. As soon as the leader was cut off, the sedition was at an end: so you find, my dear, that the wisdom of *one woman* saved a whole city.

A THREE YEARS FAMINE IN ISRAEL, ON ACCOUNT OF SAUL'S INJUSTICE TO THE GIBEONITES.

I shall not, my dear, enter into a very particular explanation of this part of sacred history, as it would be uninteresting to you; but cannot pass it quite over, lest you should think that David acted improperly on

this occasion. You know that Joshua made a league with the Gibeonites; in consequence of which, the Israelites were bound in the most solemn manner, to suffer them to live quietly amongst them. Saul, it seems, had violated this treaty, and killed a number of them in times of peace without the least provocation, in order that his friends might possess their cities: many of the Israelites had been instrumental to his injustice; God was dishonoured by the people's having broke a covenant made in his holy name, and his religion would have been despised, if the nations around had cause given them to suppose, that it admitted of a breach of a publick treaty.

The Gibeonites it is likely were by this time so increased, that they were distressed for towns to dwell in; and the Israelites, in all probability, inattentive to their necessities, made themselves partakers of Saul's sin, by retaining those cities, which were the lawful property of the Gibeonites. National sin, calls for national punishment: and famine is one of those calamities, which is generally understood by people who have religious minds, as coming immediately from the hand of God, to bring men to repentance and reformation. David in the present instance considered it in this light, and enquired of the LORD; by which means he learnt, "*that it was for Saul and his bloody house, because he slew the Gibeonites.*" As soon as the cause was known, the next care was to find out the remedy; for this purpose he applied to the Gibeonites, to learn in what manner he could give them satisfaction: they demanded, to have seven men of the family of Saul delivered into their hands: this requisition was consistent

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with their ideas of justice; therefore David was commanded by God to comply with their desire, and seven men were accordingly delivered to them, whom they hanged: as it was left to David to fix on the persons, who were by their deaths to make satisfaction to the Gibeonites, he carefully saved alive those who were the immediate descendants of Saul and Jonathan, namely, Mephibosheth the son of Jonathan, and Micah the son of Mephibosheth, with the four sons of Michah; by which means he performed the oath which he swore in the cave of Engedi, *that he would not cut off Saul's seed after him, to destroy his name out of his father's house*; and the covenant he made with Jonathan, *to shew kindness to his posterity*. The men who were hanged were inconsiderable persons, and they most likely had been actually concerned with Saul against the Gibeonites, in which case they met with the fate they deserved; but if they were innocent victims to publick justice, as they died for the good of their country, God doubtless removed them to a better state.

When you are older I shall let you read a book *, in which you will find a full vindication of David's conduct in this transaction, and satisfactory reasons why God required such an expiation to be made; but let me now repeat to you, that in respect to all those passages of sacred history which are *obscure*, we may be certain it is of no real importance to investigate them; for every part of scripture *essentially necessary to be understood, in order to obtain eternal happiness*, is so plainly expressed, that the meanest understanding may comprehend it; though persons who have leisure and abili-

* Chandler's Life of David.

ties, are by no means forbidden to employ their researches in discovering what is difficult, provided they do not in the pride of human reason, dispute the truth of DIVINE REVELTION, or say in their hearts "God is † unjust or unfaithful."

When the Gibeonites had received full satisfaction, and the famine ceased, David greatly rejoiced, and is supposed to have written the following psalm * on this occasion.

Praise waiteth for thee, O God, in Sion: and unto thee shall the vow be performed.

O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come.

Iniquities prevail against me: as for our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away.

Blessed is the man whom thou choosest and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple.

By terrible things in righteousness wilt thou answer us, O God of our salvation: who art the confidence of all the ends of the earth, and of them that are afar off upon the sea.

Which by his strength setteth fast the mountains; being girded with power.

Which stilleth the noise of the seas, the noise of their waves, and the tumult of the people.

They also that dwell in the uttermost parts are afraid at thy tokens: thou makest the out-goings of the morning and evening to rejoice.

† Patrick's Comment.

* Psalm lxxv.

Thou visitest the earth and waterest it: thou greatly enrichest it with the river of God which is full of water: thou preparest them corn, when thou hast so provided for it.

Thou waterest the ridges thereof abundantly: thou settlest the furrows thereof: thou makest it soft with showers, thou blessest the springing thereof.

Thou crownest the year with thy goodness, and thy paths drop fatness.

They drop upon the pastures of the wilderness: and the little hills rejoice on every side.

The pastures are clothed with flocks; the vallies also are covered over with corn; they shout for joy, they also sing.

In this Psalm David acknowledges, that praise is due to God from all mankind, but particularly from those of Sion, where the holy sanctuary was; he observes that they should not be discouraged by their iniquity from addressing their petitions to the LORD, since he had graciously pardoned the sins of him and his people. He confesses the almighty power of God, who is able to rule the stormy elements, and the turbulent passions of the human mind, and to shew forth his glory in remotest regions by the wonderful works of nature. David then expresses his gratitude for the late relief from famine, acknowledging that the bounties of harvest are the gifts of Divine Providence, since it would be in vain for the husbandman to pursue the labours of the field, unless the LORD sent his blessing on the land to give fertility to it.

S E C T. XXXVI.

WARS WITH THE PHILISTINES.

MOREOVER, the Philistines had yet war again with Israel, and David went down and his servants with him, and fought against the Philistines; and David waxed faint.

And Ishbi-benob, which was of the sons of the giant, (the weight of whose spear weighed three hundred shekels of brass in weight) he being girded with a new sword, thought to have slain David.

But Abishai the son of Zeruiah succoured him, and smote the Philistine, and killed him. Then the men of David sware unto him, saying, Thou shalt go no more out with us to battle, that thou quench not the light of Israel.

And it came to pass after this, that there was again a battle with the Philistines at Gob: then Sibbecai the Hushathite slew Saph, which was of the sons of the giant.

And there was again a battle in Gob with the Philistines, where Elhannan the son of Jaare-oregim, a Beth-lehemite, slew the brother of Goliath the Gittite, the staff of whose spear was like a weaver's beam.

And there was yet a battle in Gath, where was a man of great stature, that had on every hand six fingers, and on every foot six toes, four and twenty in number; and he also was born to the giant.

And when he defied Israel, Jonathan the son of Shimea the brother of David slew him.

These four were born to the giant in Gath, these four fell by the hand of David, and by the hands of his servants.

ANNOTATIONS AND REFLECTIONS.

Though this account of the four successive wars with the Philistines is expressed in very few words, there is reason to believe they lasted a considerable time. It is imagined that Absalom's rebellion encouraged the Philistines to begin them.

They had at this time several men of extraordinary stature amongst them, all it seems of the kindred of Goliath; and though they had experienced the little use of such men in an army, yet they seem to have cast their eyes on those, now flattering themselves, that by
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their help they might retrieve their honour, and take revenge upon David; but you find, that the same Almighty power that had enabled this king, when an unexperienced youth, to defeat the gigantic champion of the Philistines, assisted his valiant officers in destroying the monstrous descendants of this arrogant boaster, who like him, confided in human strength and vain idols.

The people of Israel entertained a high degree of affection for their venerable king, and would not suffer him, as he was growing old and feeble, to risk a life so valuable to them, in any future battle.

When these wars were happily ended, and* David was in perfect peace both at home and abroad, he is thought to have published the following psalm* :

*The LORD is my rock and my fortress, and my deliverer;
The GOD of my rock; in him will I trust: he is my
shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower, and
my refuge, my saviour; thou savest me from violence.*

*I will call on the LORD, who is worthy to be praised:
so shall I be saved from mine enemies.*

*When the waves of death compassed me; the floods of
ungodly men made me afraid.*

*The sorrows of hell compassed me about, the snares of
death prevented me.*

*In my distress I called upon the LORD, and cried to my
GOD: and he did hear my voice out of his temple, and my
cry did enter into his ears.*

*Then the earth shook and trembled: the foundations of
heaven moved and shook, because he was wroth.*

* 2 Sam. xxii. 2, &c.

There went up a smoke out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured: coals were kindled by it.

He bowed the heavens also and came down; and darkness was under his feet.

And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly: and he was seen upon the wings of the wind.

And he made darkness pavilions round about him, dark waters, and thick clouds of the skies.

Through the brightness before him were coals of fire kindled.

The LORD thundered from heaven, and the Most High uttered his voice.

And he sent out arrows and scattered them; lightning, and discomfited them.

And the channels of the sea appeared, the foundations of the world were discovered, at the rebuking of the LORD, at the blast of the breath of his nostrils.

He sent from above, he took me; he drew me out of many waters.

He delivered me from my strong enemy, and from them that hated me: for they were too strong for me.

They prevented me in the day of my calamity: but the LORD was my stay.

He brought me forth also into a large place: he delivered me, because he delighted in me.

The LORD rewarded me according to my righteousness: according to the cleanness of my hands hath he recompensed me.

For I have kept the ways of the LORD, and have not wickedly departed from my God.

For all his judgments were before me: and as for his statutes, I do not depart from them.

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I was also upright before him, and have kept myself from mine iniquity.

Therefore the LORD hath recompensed me according to my righteousness, according to my cleanness in his eye-sight.

With the merciful thou wilt shew thyself merciful, and with the upright man thou wilt shew thyself upright.

With the pure thou wilt shew thyself pure, and with the froward thou wilt shew thyself unfavoury.

And the afflicted people, thou wilt save: but thine eyes are upon the haughty, that thou mayest bring them down.

For thou art my lamp, O LORD: and the LORD will lighten my darkness.

For by thee I have run through a troop: by my GOD have I leaped over a wall.

As for GOD, his way is perfect; the word of the LORD is tried, he is a buckler to all them that trust in him.

For who is GOD, save the LORD? and who is a rock, save our GOD?

GOD is my strength and power: and he maketh my way perfect.

He maketh my feet like hinds feet: and setteth me upon my high places.

He teacheth my hands to war: so that a bow of steel is broken by mine arms.

Thou hast also given me the shield of thy salvation: and thy gentleness hath made me great.

Thou hast enlarged my steps under me: so that my feet did not slip.

I have pursued mine enemies, and destroyed them: and turned not again till I had consumed them.

And I have consumed them, and wounded them, that they could not arise: yea, they are fallen under my feet.

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For thou hast girded me with strength to battle : them that rose up against me, hast thou subdued under me.

Thou hast also given me the necks of mine enemies, that I might destroy them that hate me.

They looked, but there was none to save ; even unto the LORD, but he answered them not.

Then did I beat them as small as the dust of the earth, I did stamp them as the mire of the street, and did spread them abroad.

Thou also hast delivered me from the strivings of my people, thou hast kept me to be head of the heathen : a people which I knew not, shall serve me.

Strangers shall submit themselves unto me : as soon as they hear, they shall be obedient unto me.

Strangers shall fade away, and they shall be afraid out of their close places.

The LORD liveth, and blessed be my rock, and exalted be the GOD of the rock of my salvation.

It is GOD that avengeth me, and that bringeth down the people under me,

And that bringeth me forth from mine enemies : thou also hast lifted me up on high above them that rose up against me : thou hast delivered me from the violent man.

Therefore, I will give thanks unto thee, O LORD, among the heathen, and I will sing praises unto thy name.

He is the tower of salvation for his king ; and sheweth mercy to his anointed, unto David, and to his seed for evermore.

S E C T. XXXVII.

DAVID NUMBERETH THE PEOPLE—A PESTILENCE ENSUES.

AND Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel.

And David said to Joab, and to the rulers of the people, Go, number Israel from Beer-sheba even to Dan; and bring the number of them to me, that I may know it.

And Joab answered, The LORD make his people an hundred times so many more as they be: but my lord the king, are they not all my lord's servants? why then doth my lord require this thing? why will he be a cause of trespass to Israel.

Nevertheless, the king's word prevailed against Joab: wherefore Joab departed, and went throughout all Israel, and came to Jerusalem.

And Joab gave the sum of the number of the people unto David. And all they of Israel

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Israel were a thousand thousand and an hundred thousand men that drew sword: and Judah was four hundred threescore and ten thousand men that drew sword.

But Levi and Benjamin counted he not among them: for the king's word was abominable to Joab.

And God was displeased with this thing, therefore he smote Israel.

And David said unto God, I have sinned greatly, because I have done this thing: but now, I beseech thee, do away the iniquity of thy servant, for I have done very foolishly.

And the LORD spake unto Gad, David's seer, saying,

Go and tell David, saying, Thus saith the LORD, I offer thee three things, choose thee one of them that I may do it unto thee.

So Gad came to David, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Choose thee,

Either three years famine, or three months to be destroyed before thy foes, (while that the sword of thy enemies overtake thee) or else three days the sword of the LORD, even the pestilence in the land, and the angel of the LORD destroying throughout all the coast of Israel: now therefore advise thyself, what

what word I shall bring again to him that sent me.

And David said unto Gad, I am in a great strait: let me fall now into the hand of the LORD, (for very great are his mercies) but let me not fall into the hand of man.

So the LORD sent pestilence upon Israel: and there fell of Israel seventy thousand men.

And God sent an angel unto Jerusalem to destroy it: and as he was destroying, the LORD beheld, and he repented him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed, It is enough, stay now thine hand. And the angel of the LORD stood by the threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite.

And David lift up his eyes, and saw the angel of the LORD stand between the earth and the heaven, having a drawn sword in his hand stretched out over Jerusalem: then David and the elders of Israel, who were clothed in sackcloth, fell upon their faces.

And David said unto God, Is it not I that commanded the people to be numbered? even I it is that have sinned and done evil indeed; but as for these sheep, what have they done? let thine hand, I pray thee, O LORD my GOD, be on me, and on my father's

ther's house, but not on thy people that they should be plagued.

Then the angel of the LORD commanded Gad to say to David, that David should go up and set up an altar unto the LORD, in the threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite.

And David went up at the saying of Gad, which he spake in the name of the LORD.

And Ornan turned back, and saw the angel; and his four sons with him hid themselves. Now Ornan was threshing wheat.

And as David came to Ornan, Ornan looked and saw David, and went out of the threshing-floor, and bowed himself to David with his face to the ground.

Then David said to Ornan, Grant me the place of this threshing-floor, that I may build an altar therein unto the LORD, thou shalt grant it me for the full price, that the plague may be stayed from the people.

And Ornan said unto David, Take it to thee, and let my lord the king do that which is good in his eyes: lo, I give thee the oxen also for burnt-offerings, and the threshing-instruments for wood, and the wheat for the meat-offerings, I give it all.

And

And king David said to Ornan, Nay, but I will verily buy it for the full price: for I will not take that which is thine for the LORD, nor offer burnt-offerings without cost.

So David gave to Ornan for the place, six hundred shekels of gold by weight.

And David built there an altar unto the LORD, and offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings, and called upon the LORD, and he answered him from heaven by fire upon the altar of burnt-offering.

And the LORD commanded the angel, and he put up his sword again into the sheath thereof.

At that time, when David saw that the LORD had answered him in the threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite, then he sacrificed there.

For the tabernacle of the LORD which Moses made in the wilderness, and the altar of the burnt-offering were at that season in the high place at Gibeon.

But David could not go before it to enquire of God; for he was afraid, because of the sword of the angel of the LORD.

Then David said, This is the house of the LORD GOD, and this is the altar of burnt-offering for Israel.

A N N O-

ANNOTATIONS AND REFLECTIONS.

The section you have been reading, my dear, contains a most melancholy relation, and great difficulties attend the explanation of it. The sin which David committed, was a breach of that law of Moses, which you formerly read. * It is supposed that in the pride of his heart he numbered the people, and that the Israelites *wilfully neglected* to pay the tribute which the LORD enjoined as an acknowledgment that their lives, which were justly forfeited to him by their sins, were redeemed by his mercy.

We will not dwell much on this passage, as I think there is no danger of our being guilty of the same crime; and should we fail in our endeavours to understand it, we may be tempted to entertain unworthy notions of the Supreme Being. We may be sure it was a *presumptuous* sin, and that David's conscience accused him of having *wilfully* committed it. I think we may likewise conclude, from the nature of the punishments proposed, that the Israelites were partakers in the offence; for pestilence, war, and famine, were appointed by the ALMIGHTY for the chastisement of *national sins*; and what can be more likely to awaken the consciences of a people who are forgetful of their duty to God, than a sudden calamity which sweeps off thousands in a day?

It is impossible to describe or even to imagine the horror of such a scene; and I hope, my dear, such a dreadful judgment will never fall upon this land in

* Section xlii. vol. i.

your

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your days; but if the increasing impiety of the nation should provoke the LORD to afflict us with pestilence, you may learn from David's example, to humble yourself before GOD, with sincere resolutions of obeying his holy will, and then you may hope to be preserved as he was, through divine mercy.

Then you "*need * not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day; nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noon day: a thousand shall fall beside thee, and ten thousand at thy right hand, but it shall not come near thee. Thou shalt abide under the shadow of the Almighty, and he shall deliver thee.*"

It is a happy thing to reflect, that in all dangers, how great soever, those who are religious may confide in GOD for protection. In this world, good persons are safe under his *shadow*, as the psalmist expresses it; but if it is the divine pleasure, to permit them to fall amongst sinners in a time of publick calamity, it is but to remove them into the *sunshine* of his GLORIOUS PRESENCE.

* Psalm xci.

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S E C T. XXXVIII.

DAVID MAKETH PREPARATIONS FOR BUILDING
THE TEMPLE—INSTRUCTETH SOLOMON—
CHARGETH THE PRINCES.

AND David commanded to gather together the strangers that were in the land of Israel; and he set masons to hew wrought stones to build the house of God.

And David prepared iron in abundance for the nails for the doors of the gates, and for the joinings; and brass in abundance without weight:

Also cedar-trees in abundance; for the Zidonians, and they of Tyre, brought much cedar wood to David.

And David said, Solomon my son is young and tender, and the house that is to be build-
ed for the LORD, must be exceeding magnificent, of fame and of glory throughout all countries: I will therefore now make preparation for it. So David prepared abundantly before his death.

Then he called for Solomon his son, and charged him to build an house for the LORD God of Israel.

And David said to Solomon, My son, as for me, it was in my mind to build an house unto the name of the LORD my GOD :

But the word of the LORD came to me, saying, Thou hast shed blood abundantly, and hast made great wars : thou shalt not build an house unto my name, because thou hast shed much blood upon the earth in my sight.

Behold, a son shall be born to thee, who shall be a man of rest ; and I will give him rest from all his enemies round about : for his name shall be Solomon, and I will give peace and quietness unto Israel in his days.

He shall build an house for my name ; and he shall be my son, and I will be his father ; and I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel for ever.

Now, my son, the LORD be with thee, and prosper thou, and build the house of the LORD thy GOD, as he hath said of thee.

Only the LORD give thee wisdom and understanding, and give thee charge concern-

ing Israel, that thou mayest keep the law of the LORD thy God.

Then shalt thou prosper, if thou takest heed to fulfil the statutes and judgments which the LORD charged Moses with concerning Israel. Be strong and of good courage; dread not nor be dismayed.

Now behold, in my trouble I have prepared for the house of the LORD an hundred thousand talents of gold, and a thousand thousand talents of silver; and of brass and iron without weight: for it is in abundance: timber also and stone have I prepared; and thou mayest add thereto.

Moreover, there are workmen with thee in abundance, hewers, and workers of stone and timber, and all manner of cunning men for every manner of work.

Of the gold, the silver, and the brass, and the iron there is no number. Arise therefore, and be doing, and the LORD be with thee.

David also commanded all the princes of Israel to help Solomon his son, saying,

Is not the LORD your GOD with you? and hath he not given you rest on every side? for he hath given the inhabitants of the land

into mine hand; and the land is subdued before the LORD, and before his people.

Now set your heart and your soul to seek the LORD your God: arise therefore, and build ye the sanctuary of the LORD God, to bring the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and the holy vessels of God, into the house that is to be built to the name of the LORD.

ANNOTATIONS AND REFLECTIONS.

You read my dear, in the last Section, that David purchased the threshing-floor of Ornan for a considerable sum of money, and that he determined to build the Temple on that spot; he received instruction concerning the form of the Temple and its furniture, in the same manner as Moses did in respect to the Tabernacle; by this means he was enabled to direct all the necessary preparations. You find he had collected together immense treasures for this holy purpose. Gold and silver abounded in those days much more than at present, for many mines have been entirely exhausted. He had been victorious in above twenty battles with the richest enemies in the world, many of whom had shields of gold, their weapons were at least ornamented with that metal, and even their camels' necks were adorned with golden chains: they also carried idols of gold and silver with them; therefore we may easily conceive, that the personal spoils which David took from his enemies, must have amounted to an incredible

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ble sum, and in all probability, the spoils of their cities to a much greater.

Edom, all the Arabias and Syrias on both sides of the Euphrates, and the Palestine coast (which countries abounded with mines) were tributary to him; therefore the tribute that was annually paid to him must have been immense. David likewise brought great wealth to his kingdom, by trading with other nations; for his country was well cultivated, the produce of the land of Israel being much more than sufficient for its inhabitants; neither could they consume all the commodities with which their numerous flocks and herds supplied them.

Since * his conquest of Edom he had another source of riches; for by reducing that country to a province, he became master of two sea-port towns on the Red Sea, and Elath, Esion-geber; from whence he carried on for twenty-five years before his death, a very profitable trade to Ophir and Tarshish in the eastern part of the world; each of these places, among other valuable articles, furnished David with great quantities of gold and silver.

So you see, my dear, it is easy to account for David's possessing such amazing riches; and from the piety of his disposition we may conclude, that he was desirous of employing them in such a manner as might shew to the world, that he acknowledged God as the *supreme* King of Israel, and considered himself only as the captain and shepherd of the Lord's inheritance.

* See Prideaux's Connection of the Old and New Testament.

S E C T. XXXIX.

DAVID BEING OLD, ADONIJA H HIS SON
CAUSETH HIMSELF TO BE PROCLAIMED KING—
SOLOMON, BY DAVID'S APPOINTMENT, IS
ANOINTED—SOLOMON SPARETH THE LIFE OF
ADONIJA H.

AND king David was old and stricken
in years; then Adonijah exalted him-
self, saying, I will be king: and he prepared
him chariots and horsemen, and fifty men to
run before him.

And his father had not displeased him at
any time, in saying, Why hast thou done so?
and he also was a very goodly man: and his
mother bare him after Absalom.

And he conferred with Joab the son of
Zeruiah, and with Abiathar the priest: and
they following Adonijah, helped him.

But Zadok the priest, and Benaiah the son
of Jehoiada, and Nathan the prophet, and
Shimei, and Rei, and the mighty men which
belonged to David, went not with Adonijah.

And

ADONIJAH'S USURPATION. 271

And Adonijah slew sheep and oxen and fat cattle, by the stone of Zoheleth, which is by En-rogel, and called all his brethren the king's sons, and all the men of Judah the king's servants.

But Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah, and the mighty men, and Solomon his brother he called not.

Wherefore Nathan spake unto Bath-sheba the mother of Solomon, saying, Hast thou not heard that Adonijah the son of Haggith doth reign, and David our lord knoweth it not?

Now therefore come, let me, I pray thee, give thee counsel, that thou mayest save thine own life, and the life of thy son Solomon.

Go, and get thee in unto king David, and say unto him, Didst not thou, my lord, O king, swear unto thine handmaid, saying, Assuredly, Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne? why then doth Adonijah reign?

Behold, while thou yet talkest there with the king, I will also come in after thee, and confirm thy words.

N: 4

And

And Bath-sheba went in unto the king, into the chamber; and the king was very old.

And Bath-sheba bowed, and did obeisance unto the king: and the king said, What wouldst thou?

And she said unto him, My lord, thou swearst by the LORD thy GOD unto thine handmaid, saying, Assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne:

And now, behold, Adonijah reigneth; and now my lord the king, thou knowest it not.

And he hath slain oxen, and fat cattle, and sheep in abundance, and hath called all the sons of the king, and Abiathar the priest, and Joab the captain of the host: but Solomon thy servant hath he not called.

And thou, my lord, O king, the eyes of all Israel are upon thee, that thou shouldst tell them who shall sit on the throne of my lord the king after him.

Otherwise it shall come to pass, when my lord the king shall sleep with his fathers, that I and my son Solomon shall be counted offenders.

And

And lo, while she yet talked with the king, Nathan the prophet also came in.

And they told the king, saying, Behold, Nathan the prophet. And when he was come in before the king, he bowed himself before the king with his face to the ground.

And Nathan said, My lord, O king, hast thou said, Adonijah shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne?

For he is gone down this day, and hath slain oxen, and fat cattle, and sheep in abundance, and hath called all the king's sons, and the captains of the host, and Abiathar the priest; and behold, they eat and drink before him, and say, God save king Adonijah.

But me, even thy servant, and Zadok the priest, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and thy servant Solomon hath he not called.

Is this thing done by my lord the king, and thou hast not shewed it unto thy servant, who should sit on the throne of my lord the king after him.

Then king David answered and said, Call me Bath-sheba: and she came into the king's presence, and stood before the king.

And the king sware, and said, As the LORD liveth, that hath redeemed my soul out of all distress,

Even as I sware unto thee by the LORD GOD of Israel, saying, Assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne in my stead; even so will I certainly do this day.

Then Bath-sheba bowed with her face to the earth, and did reverence to the king, and said, Let my lord king David live for ever.

And king David said, Call me Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada. And they came before the king.

The king also said unto them, Take with you the servants of your lord, and cause Solomon my son to ride upon mine own mule, and bring him down to Gihon.

And let Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, anoint him there king over Israel: and blow ye with the trumpet, and say, God save king Solomon.

Then ye shall come up after him, that he may come and sit upon my throne; for he shall be king in my stead: and I have ap-

pointed

pointed him to be ruler over Israel, and over Judah.

And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada answered the king, and said, Amen: the LORD GOD of my lord the king say so too.

As the LORD hath been with my lord the king, even so be he with Solomon, and make his throne greater than the throne of my lord king David.

So Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and the Cherethites, and the Pelethites, went down, and caused Solomon to ride upon king David's mule, and brought him to Gihon.

And Zadok the priest took an horn of oil out of the tabernacle, and anointed Solomon: and they blew the trumpet, and all the people said, God save king Solomon.

And all the people came up after him, and the people piped with pipes, and rejoiced with great joy, so that the earth rent with the sound of them.

And Adonijah and all the guests that were with him, heard it as they had made an end of eating: and when Joab heard the sound of the trumpet, he said, wherefore is this noise of the city, being in an uproar?

And while he yet spake, behold, Jonathan the son of Abiathar the priest came, and Adonijah said unto him, Come in, for thou art a valiant man, and bringest good tidings.

And Jonathan answered and said to Adonijah, Verily our lord king David hath made Solomon king.

And the king hath sent with him Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and the Cherethites, and the Pelethites, and they have caused him to ride upon the king's mule.

And Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet have anointed him king in Gihon: and they are come up from thence rejoicing, so that the city rang again: this is the noise that ye have heard.

And also Solomon sitteth on the throne of the kingdom.

And moreover, the king's servants came to bless our lord king David, saying, God make the name of Solomon better than thy name, and make his throne greater than thy throne: and the king bowed himself upon the bed.

And also thus said the king, Blessed be the LORD GOD of Israel, which hath given

one to sit on my throne this day, mine eyes even seeing it.

And all the guests that were with Adonijah, were afraid, and rose up, and went every man his way.

And Adonijah feared because of Solomon, and arose, and went, and caught hold on the horns of the altar.

And it was told Solomon, saying, Behold, Adonijah feareth king Solomon: for lo, he hath caught hold on the horns of the altar, saying, Let king Solomon swear unto me to day, that he will not slay his servant with the sword.

And Solomon said, If he will shew himself a worthy man, there shall not an hair of him fall to the earth: but if wickedness shall be found in him, he shall die.

So king Solomon sent, and they brought him down from the altar; and he came and bowed himself to king Solomon: and Solomon said unto him, Go to thine house.

ANNOTATIONS AND REFLECTIONS.

Solomon was a much younger man than Adonijah, who after Absalom's death was the eldest, and therefore according to the usual custom of other nations, he was heir to the crown; but as * God himself had been the *only* king of the Israelites till Samuel's days, so when at the people's desire the form of government was altered, the LORD still reserved to himself the right of nominating the successor, when the throne became vacant, as you may read in the law of Moses: "*When † thou art come into the land, which the LORD thy God giveth thee, and shalt say I will set a king over me, thou shalt by all means make him king whom the LORD shall chuse;*" so that when God had declared his appointment of Solomon (as he did by the prophet Nathan) David was not at liberty to make choice of any other; but we may suppose that all his sons were jealous of this preference given to a younger brother, which made them so ready to join with Adonijah.

At what time David swore to Bathsheba that Solomon should sit on his throne, is uncertain; but most likely on Nathan's being sent to give Solomon a name, which denoted his being beloved of the LORD, David gave his mother a solemn promise, that since God had so manifestly declared in favour of this child, he would for his part, do the utmost in his power to facilitate his succession.

Adonijah was struck with consternation when he heard, that Solomon by David's command was declared

* Stackhouse on the Bible. † Deut. xvii. 14, 15-

king,

king, and that the people received him with shouts of approbation. All his ambitious views were in an instant frustrated, and he found that it was in vain to oppose the will of the LORD, though he had prevailed on Joab the general of the forces, and Abiathar the high-priest, to espouse his cause. How it came to pass that they proceeded in such an important affair without the knowledge of David, is not related; but from the circumstance of David's giving Zadok the preference on a former occasion, we have reason to suppose, that Abiathar had been irregular in the administration of his office. As for Joab, he frequently treated his sovereign with the utmost disrespect, and therefore his conduct is the less to be wondered at.

Nathan, Zadok, and Benaiah were known to Adonijah as true and faithful subjects to king David, and for that reason they were excluded from the general invitation; and we may be sure, if they had been invited, they would have refused to go; therefore you must not suppose that Nathan's displeasure towards Adonijah arose from this circumstance of neglect, but that he mentioned it, as a proof to the king, that his fidelity, as well as that of Zadok and Benaiah, were too publickly known for any one to attempt perverting them; and to convince their good old monarch, that there were still some persons of consequence ready to maintain the right of him whom God had chosen.

Adonijah fled to the altar, supposing that veneration for that sacred place would prevent his being put to death; his scheme succeeded, and finding there was no other way of saving his life, he paid obeisance to his lawful sovereign, and withdrew his claim to the crown.

It

280 ADONIJAH'S INGRATITUDE.

It must doubtless have given great affliction to David in his latter days, to meet with such unkindness and ingratitude from a darling son, whom he had ever treated with the utmost degree of tenderness and indulgence; but he uttered no murmurs or complaints, for he saw the hand of the LORD still chastising him, in order that his penitence might continue to the last; and that the world might know from his example, what punishments the LORD has appointed for such crimes as David committed, and the behaviour which GOD requires from offenders against his holy laws.

SECT.

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S E C T. XL

DAVID MAKETH PREPARATIONS FOR BUILDING
THE TEMPLE—COMMANDETH SOLOMON TO
BUILD IT—AND CHARGETH THE PRINCES TO
ASSIST HIS SON.

AND David assembled all the princes of Israel, the princes of the tribes, and the captains of the companies that ministered to the king by course, and the captains over the thousands, and captains over the hundreds, and the stewards over all the substance and possession of the king, and of his sons, with the officers, and with the mighty men, and with all the valiant men unto Jerusalem.

Then David the king stood up upon his feet, and said, Hear me, my brethren, and my people, As for me, I had in mine heart to build an house of rest for the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and for the footstool of our God, and had made ready for the building;

But

But GOD said unto me, Thou shalt not build an house for my name, because thou hast been a man of war, and hast shed blood.

Howbeit, the LORD GOD of Israel chose me before all the house of my father, to be king over Israel for ever. For he hath chosen Judah to be the ruler; and of the house of Judah, the house of my father; and among the sons of my father, he liked me to make me king over all Israel:

And of all my sons, (for the LORD hath given me many sons,) he hath chosen Solomon my son to sit upon the throne of the kingdom of the LORD over Israel.

And he said unto me, Solomon thy son, he shall build my house and my courts: for I have chosen him to be my son, and I will be his father.

Moreover, I will establish his kingdom for ever, if he be constant to do my commandments and my judgments, as at this day.

Now therefore in the sight of all Israel the congregation of the LORD, and in the audience of our GOD, keep and seek for all the commandments of the LORD your GOD: that ye may possess this good land, and leave it

it for an inheritance for your children after you for ever.

And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the GOD of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind. For the LORD searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever.

Take heed now: for the LORD hath chosen thee to build an house for the sanctuary: be strong, and do it.

Then David gave to Solomon his son, the pattern of all that he had by the Spirit of the LORD. And he gave of gold by weight, and of silver also by weight, for all instruments of every kind of service.

All this, said David, the LORD made me understand in writing by his hand upon me, even all the works of this pattern.

And David said to Solomon his son, Be strong and of good courage, and do it: fear not, nor be dismayed: for the LORD GOD, even my God, will be with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee, until thou hast finished

finished all the work for the service of the house of the LORD:

And behold, the courses of the priests and the Levites, even they shall be with thee for all the service of the house of GOD: and there shall be with thee for all manner of workmanship every willing skilful man, for any manner of service: also the princes and all the people will be wholly at thy commandment.

Furthermore David the king said unto all the congregation, Solomon my son, whom alone GOD hath chosen, is yet young and tender, and the work is great; for the palace is not for man, but for the LORD GOD.

Now I have prepared with all my might for the house of my GOD, the gold for things to be made of gold, and the silver for things of silver, and the brass for things of brass, the iron for things of iron, and wood for things of wood: onyx-stones, and stones to be set, glistering stones, and of divers colours, and all manner of precious stones, and marble-stones in abundance.

Moreover, because I have set my affection to the house of my GOD, I have of mine own proper good, of gold and silver, which
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I have given to the house of my God, over and above all that I have prepared for the holy house.

Even three thousand talents of gold of the gold of Ophir, and seven thousand talents of refined silver to overlay the walls of the houses withal :

The gold for things of gold, and the silver for things of silver; and for all manner of work to be made by the hands of artificers. And who then is willing to consecrate his service this day unto the LORD.

Then the chief of the fathers and princes of the tribes of Israel, and the captains of thousands and of hundreds, with the rulers over the king's work, offered willingly.

And gave for the service of the house of God, of gold, five thousand talents and ten thousand drams; and of silver, ten thousand talents; and of brass eighteen thousand talents: and one hundred thousand talents of iron.

And they with whom precious stones were found, gave them to the treasure of the house of the LORD, by the hand of Jahiel the Gershonite.

Then

Then the people rejoiced for that they offered willingly, because with perfect heart they offered willingly to the LORD: and David the king also rejoiced with great joy.

Wherefore David blessed the LORD before all the congregation: and David said, Blessed be thou, LORD GOD of Israel our father, for ever and ever.

Thine, O LORD, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty; for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O LORD, and thou art exalted as head above all.

Both riches and honour come of thee, and thou reignest over all; and in thine hand is power and might; and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all.

Now therefore, our GOD, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name.

But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee.

For we are strangers before thee, and sojourners, as were all our fathers; our days
on

on the earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding.

O LORD our GOD, all this store that we have prepared to build thee an house for thine holy name, cometh of thine hand, and is all thine own.

I know also, my GOD, that thou triest the heart, and hast pleasure in uprightness. As for me, in the uprightness of mine heart I have willingly offered all these things: and now have I seen with joy thy people which are present here to offer willingly unto thee.

O LORD GOD of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel our fathers, keep this for ever in the imagination of the thoughts of the heart of thy people, and prepare their heart unto thee:

And give unto Solomon my son a perfect heart to keep thy commandments, thy testimonies, and thy statutes, and to do all these things, and to build the palace for the which I have made provision.

And David said to all the congregation, Now bless the LORD your GOD. And the king and all the congregation blessed the LORD GOD of their fathers, and bowed down their heads, and worshipped the LORD.]

And

And they sacrificed sacrifices unto the LORD, and offered burnt-offerings unto the LORD on the morrow after that day, even a thousand bullocks, a thousand rams, and a thousand lambs, with their drink-offerings, and sacrifices in abundance for all Israel :

And did eat and drink before the LORD on that day with great gladness. And they made Solomon the son of David king the second time, and anointed him unto the LORD to be the chief governor, and Zadok to be priest.

Then Solomon sat on the throne of the LORD as king instead of David his father, and prospered, and all Israel obeyed him.

And all the princes, and the mighty men, and all the sons likewise of king David submitted themselves unto Solomon the king.

And the LORD magnified Solomon exceedingly in the sight of all Israel, and bestowed upon him such royal majesty as had not been on any king before him in Israel,

ANNOTATIONS AND REFLECTIONS.

At the time Adonijah attempted to seize the throne, David was confined to his bed with excessive weakness; but it seems he recovered sufficient strength to be present at

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A PRAYER FOR SOLOMON. 289

at a solemn assembly which was called together in order to establish Solomon's pretensions. I am sure, my dear, you must admire the humility and piety of the speech which David made on this occasion, as well as the earnest desire expressed in it of promoting the glory of God. To remove all jealousy from the minds of his other sons, and prevent dissensions amongst his subjects, he publicly declared, that God *himself* had appointed Solomon *to sit upon the throne of the KINGDOM of the LORD over Israel*.

The princes convinced, that all which David said and did on this occasion, was agreeable to the divine will, gladly followed his royal example * in devoting part of their riches to the glory of God: and after having offered their sacrifices, feasted on them with great joy before the LORD. The sentiments of David's heart on this joyful occasion, may be learnt from that excellent thanksgiving which he then uttered. It is supposed that after he had blessed the people, he offered up the following prayer † for Solomon.

KING DAVID'S PRAYER FOR HIS SON SOLOMON.

Give the king thy judgments, O God, and thy righteousness unto the king's son.

He shall judge thy people with righteousness, and thy poor with judgment.

* The value of the gold (besides the seven thousand talents of silver) which David gave out of his own private estate, amounted to the sum of 21,000,000 l. of our money, which might easily be amassed by repeated voyages to Ophir and Tarshish.

† Psalm lxxii.

The mountains shall bring peace to the people, and the little hills, by righteousness.

He shall judge the poor of the people, he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor.

They shall fear thee as long as the sun and moon endure, throughout all generations.

He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass: as showers that water the earth.

In his days shall the righteous flourish: and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth.

He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth.

They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him: and his enemies shall lick the dust.

The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts.

Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him.

For he shall deliver the needy when he crieth: the poor also, and him that hath no helper.

He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy.

He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence: and precious shall their blood be in his sight.

And he shall live, and to him shall be given of the gold of Sheba; prayer also shall be made for him continually, and daily shall he be praised.

There shall be an handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon, and they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth.

N. A PRAYER FOR SOLOMON. 291

His name shall endure for ever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun, and men shall be blessed in him; all nations shall call him blessed.

Blessed be the LORD GOD, the GOD of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things.

And blessed be his glorious name for ever, and let the whole earth be filled with his glory; Amen, and amen.

The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended.

“ In * this psalm David first recommends Solomon to the divine benediction, and then instructs him how to make his people happy, by describing the qualities of a good king, and the prosperous state of the kingdom under his government; which his eyes began to behold before he died, and he hoped others would behold, when he was gone, for the example and admiration of all succeeding generations.” David also spake prophetically in respect to the kingdom of the MESSIAH, as I shall have occasion to observe to you.

* Patrick's Comment.

S E C T. XLI.

DAVID GIVETH A CHARGE TO SOLOMON HIS
SON, AND DIETH.

NOW the days of David drew nigh,
that he should die ; and he charged
Solomon his son, saying,

I go the way of all the earth : be thou
strong therefore, and shew thyself a man.

And keep the charge of the LORD thy
God, to walk in his ways, to keep his sta-
tures and his commandments, and his judg-
ments and his testimonies, as it is written in
the law of Moses, that thou mayest prosper
in all that thou doest, and whithersoever
thou turnest thyself :

That the LORD may continue his word
which he spake concerning me, saying, If
thy children take heed to their way, to walk
before me in truth, with all their heart and
with all their soul, there shall not fail thee
(said he) a man on the throne of Israel.

Moreover,

DAVID'S CHARGE TO SOLOMON. 293

Moreover, thou knowest also what Joab the son of Zeruiah did to me, and what he did to the two captains of the hosts of Israel, unto Abner the son of Ner, and unto Amasa the son of Jether, whom he slew, and shed the blood of war in peace, and put the blood of war upon his girdle that was about his loins, and in his shoes that were on his feet.

Do therefore according to thy wisdom, and let not his hoar head go down to the grave in peace.

But shew kindness unto the sons of Barzillai the Gileadite, and let them be of those that eat at thy table: for so they came to me when I fled because of Absalom thy brother.

And behold, thou hast with thee Shimei the son of Gera, a Benjamite of Bahurim, which cursed me with a grievous curse, in the day when I went to Mahanaim: but he came down to meet me at Jordan, and I sware to him by the LORD, saying, I will not put thee to death with the sword.

Now therefore hold him not guiltless: for thou art a wise man, and knowest what thou oughtest to do unto him; but his hoar head bring thou down to the grave with blood.

So David slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David.

And the time that he reigned over Israel was forty years; seven years reigned he in Hebron, and thirty and three years reigned he in Jerusalem.

And he died in a good old age, full of days, riches and honour. And Solomon his son reigned in his stead.

ANNOTATIONS AND REFLECTIONS.

As David was sensible that his last hours drew nigh, he called for his son Solomon, that he might with his dying lips enforce the admonitions he had formerly given him concerning obedience to the LORD; and likewise instruct him in some particulars, necessary to secure his peaceable possession of the throne.

Joab was a man of a very turbulent spirit, who had on several occasions resisted David's authority, and had lately joined in a conspiracy against Solomon; it was therefore likely, that he would give the young king a great deal of trouble, and Solomon perhaps might be induced to spare him on account of his venerable years, and the high rank he had long borne in the army; David therefore exhorted Solomon to act towards him *as wisdom should direct*; and reminded his son of the former crimes Joab had committed, how frequently he had opposed the lawful commands of his sovereign, and how treacherously he had murdered Abner and Amasa.

From

DAVID'S CHARGE TO SOLOMON. 295

From David's own words when Joab murdered Abner, we may conclude, that he certainly would have called him to his trial immediately; but he feared that by attempting it, he might occasion more bloodshed amongst his subjects, as Joab had great influence in the army: neither was the king in a situation to admit of his taking vengeance for the death of Amasa, as he was at that time, but just returned to the royal city, and the kingdom in the utmost confusion.

David's general behaviour to his enemies gives us reason to suppose, that for every *private* injury, he would readily have forgiven Joab; but as *KING of Israel*, he *could not* pardon him without being guilty of a breach of *GOD's* commands himself; for the law was very strong against *wilful murder*, and admitted of no atonement for it by sacrifices and prayers. Supposing that the anger of *GOD* could be appeased by humiliation, it is impossible to make restitution to the dead; for this reason the *LORD* commanded, that he who killed another, should forfeit his own life. Besides, "*in the image of GOD made he man*;" therefore it was *impious* for any one to destroy that *body* in which the *CREATOR* had placed an *immortal Soul*, since the Supreme Being alone has a right to dispense life and death. You must likewise recollect, that the land of Israel was peculiarly sanctified by the *visible manifestation* of the *PRESENCE of GOD*, who had said (by the mouth of Moses) "*Ye shall not pollute the land wherein I dwell, for blood defileth the land, which cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed therein, but by the blood of him that shed it. Defile not therefore the land wherein I dwell, for I the LORD dwell amongst the children of*

296 DAVID'S CHARGE TO SOLOMON.

Israel." So you see my dear, that the king, who suffered a wilful murderer to live, endangered the bringing a curse upon his kingdom, and was answerable in a great measure for any subsequent murders the offender might commit. The Israelites it is true slew a great number in *war*, but they were persons who had themselves *defaced the image of God* by their abominable practices, and had forfeited their lives by their crimes; in respect to these therefore, the Israelites were but the instruments of divine justice, and acted by God's express command. And so did those who put to death such as were guilty of capital offences; for God had ordained the punishment, and it was the duty of the magistrate to put it in execution.

I hope, my dear, you now understand, that it was for the sake of *publick justice*, and not to gratify *private resentment*, that David advised Solomon "*not to let Joab's hoar head go down to the grave in peace.*"

Some learned authors * are of opinion, that the text relating to Shimei is not properly translated, and that it should have been rendered, "*Now therefore hold him not guiltless, (for thou art a wise man, and knowest what thou oughtest to do unto him) NOR his hoar head bring thou down to the grave with blood.*" If this is the right interpretation of the passage, (which you will find Solomon's treatment of Shimei confirms) then we may understand, that David only intended to caution his son to keep a strict eye upon Shimei, as his loyalty was by no means to be depended on; neither was it consistent with wisdom and policy to permit such a seditious

* Chandler's and Delany's *Life of David*.

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person to enjoy the same privileges in every respect, as his faithful subjects did.

When David had given all requisite instructions to Solomon, his business on earth was finished; and as the faculties of his mind were unimpaired, there is no doubt but he passed his last moments in pious meditations.

He * had set the LORD always before him, therefore (even in this tremendous hour) his heart was glad, and *his glory* (or *immortal spirit*) rejoiced; for he firmly trusted that it would not be left *for ever* in the place of the dead, but that even his *body* should *rise again*; and that GOD would *redeem* his SOUL from the power of the grave, and not suffer him, who had been sanctified by the inspiration of the *holy Spirit*, to see corruption; but would shew him the path of life, which leadeth to the presence of GOD, where is fulness of joy, and at whose right hand there are pleasures for evermore!

A RETROSPECTIVE VIEW OF THE CHARACTER OF
KING DAVID, THE MAN AFTER GOD'S OWN
HEART.

We have now, my dear, gone entirely through the history of king David, and I am sure it must have afforded you great entertainment and instruction; he certainly was one of the best men that ever lived upon earth, and none of the † boasted heroes of antiquity are

* See Psalm xvi. 8, &c. and xlix. 15. † See in Dr. De-lany's Life of David, a parallel between this king, and the heroes of profane history.

worthy to stand in any degree of competition with him, either for courage or virtues; and yet you will often hear, among those who call themselves *learned* and *polite*, the character of this king vilified in the most opprobrious terms, because he is stiled in scripture, the "*man after God's own heart*," notwithstanding he was guilty of great violations of the *moral law*; it is therefore necessary for me to inform you, how you are to understand this expression. You remember, my dear, that Saul, a short time after he was made king, broke through the conditions on which he had been raised to *sit on the throne of the LORD over Israel*, and arrogated to *himself* the supreme power, instead of acting as God's *vicegerent*; and for this cause, the prophet Samuel was sent to tell him, that he was rejected *as captain of the LORD's inheritance*, and that his kingdom should not descend to his posterity, for "*the LORD had sought him a man after his own heart*;" that is to say, one who would never forget that he received his authority from the LORD, and was bound to govern himself agreeably to God's commands. David, when a humble shepherd, was remarkable for his piety and amiable disposition, and therefore justified the preference which was given to him at that time.

We are told, that immediately after he was anointed *captain of the LORD's inheritance*, and had the promise of the kingdom given to him, the *Spirit* of the LORD came on him, and we read of his performing many acts that required supernatural assistance: all the successes which the Israelites had against the Philistines during the remainder of Saul's reign, was under David; from which Saul was led to suspect, that he would also

superfede

supersede him in the throne; till at last, his jealousy
 was so inveterate, that he resolved, if possible, to de-
 stroy him: David, however, was protected by an Al-
 mighty arm, for (notwithstanding it must be acknow-
 ledged, that he committed many errors, which shew
 that he was subject to human imperfection). he pre-
 served the highest reverence for GOD, and zeal for
 the honour of religion, and therefore he was delivered
 from the most imminent dangers by the interposition
 of Divine Providence, being still in the general tenor
 of his conduct, *a man after God's own heart*. When
 he gave way to the *impetuosity of passion*, he was al-
 ways *unfortunate*; but adversity had its proper effect
 on his mind; he prayed for pardon, and the *Spirit of*
 the LORD again assisted him: at length, after a variety
 of trials, he was anointed king over all Israel; at which
 time he entered into a *covenant*, that he would consider
 the people as sheep committed to his care by the LORD,
 would provide for their safety, and rule them with
 tenderness; and as *captain of the LORD's inheritance*,
 would help them to subdue their enemies: we may also
 collect from many of his psalms, that the LORD had
 made a *covenant* with David; and assured him by his
holy Spirit, that if he continued faithful to the trust re-
 posed in him, he would establish his kingdom *for ever*;
 and that if his posterity were obedient to the LORD,
 they should reign after him, in regular succession, till a
 prince should be born of David's race, that should rule
 over all the kingdoms of the earth. David understood
 this promise as relating to the MESSIAH, and though
 many years before our Saviour appeared on earth, ac-
 knowledged him to be HIS LORD, which proves that
 he had perfect faith in GOD.

As soon as David was settled on the throne, his great study was to shew forth the GLORY of GOD, and to promote the prosperity of Israel; for these purposes he established publick worship, restored the law of Moses, and made most excellent regulations in the government. He subdued all the idolatrous nations that professed enmity to the LORD JEHOVAH, and always imputed his success to GOD; during the whole of his reign he governed his people with the utmost clemency and justice, and was beloved and honoured by them to the end of his life; and his history abounds with instances of his generosity, benevolence, mildness, and magnanimity. In respect to Uriah, he certainly was a great offender against the *moral law*, and by that law *his life was forfeited*; however, in consideration of his exemplary *penitence*, and his *general* fidelity, it pleased GOD (who had an undoubted right to do it) to *pardon him*; but that no one might be encouraged to suppose *wicked actions were excusable*, he was condemned to suffer such afflictions as *should deter others from committing the same crimes*; and we may judge, from the consolations he received by the holy Spirit, that his behaviour under these chastisements, was such as became *the man after GOD's own heart*. As soon as the end for which the punishment was inflicted on him was answered, he was once more restored to peace, and admitted to the holy Tabernacle; where he poured forth his soul in thankful acknowledgments of the goodness of the LORD, and promises of future obedience.

When David found his latter end approaching, he made known to his people that Solomon was appointed to succeed him in the throne, caused him to be anointed in his life time, acquainted him with the *covenant of*

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the LORD, and exhorted him to observe the conditions of it. Whilst I am endeavouring to give you a just idea of the character of David, I must not omit, my dear, to mention his collection of Psalms, a treasury of divine instruction, of inestimable value, which, as long as the world lasts, must be held in the highest estimation by pious persons; since they are so adapted to the common occasions of life, that every one, from the highest monarch to the meanest slave, may appropriate them to his use: they teach us not only *how* God must be worshipped, but furnish us with the means of doing it in the most acceptable manner: the afflicted may pray, the sinner express contrition, and the happy rejoice before the LORD, in the very words of David: national calamities may be deplored, and national mercies acknowledged by these divine compositions; the harmonious concert is sanctified by such heavenly strains, and the artless notes of the humblest christian, dignified by the poetry of the *sweet singer of Israel*. Many of the psalms begin with prayer or praise, and end with assurances to the humble and penitent, that the LORD will preserve and protect all those who trust in him: in such passages you may clearly discern the marks of *divine inspiration*; and they were certainly dictated by the *holy Spirit*, for the consolation, not only of David, but every one else who will accept of this divine bounty; and even the *curses* which David in the character of king of Israel, denounced against the idolatrous nations, may serve as *admonitions* to us, since they point out the crimes for which those sinners were destroyed; let us therefore *examine our own hearts by them*, and if we find there any inclination to commit such sins let us make haste to repent, lest the LORD cast us out also for

for rebelling against him: we must be careful *not to apply these curses to such as have injured us*, for no christian can be in the situation which David was when he penned them; and besides, we have an express command "*to love our enemies: to bless, and curse not.*"

I think we may learn from David's history, that a *man after God's own heart*, is one who makes the divine will the general rule of his life; who has a fervent zeal for the honour of God, and a benevolent regard to the happiness of mankind; who is patient in adversity, humble in prosperity; who examines his own heart, to see if there is any way of wickedness in him; acknowledges his sins with shame and repentance, and avoids the repetition of them; who aspires after that *perfection of goodness*, which human nature in its present state cannot attain to; and who trusts to the infinite mercy of God for pardon, esteeming *his favour* as the highest blessing he can enjoy, and longing to be admitted to those blissful regions, where, freed from his present tumultuous passions, he may render more acceptable service to this best of Beings.

God vindicated his honour by shewing displeasure against David for his crimes, and has caused his history to be written for the edification of the world; if we turn it into *ridicule*, we *despise the admonitions of the Lord*; and if we *harden ourselves in sin*, instead of *amending our lives* by David's example, and **REPROACH GOD** for calling him "*the man after his own heart*," we *blaspheme his HOLY NAME*; therefore I hope you will never join in such profane conversation, as it will prove that you are neither well grounded in religion, nor acquainted with sacred history, and that you want to find pretences for continuing in wickedness.

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S E C T. XLII.

SOLOMON REIGNETH—ADONIJAH PUT TO DEATH—THE PRIESTHOOD TAKEN FROM ABIA-THAR—JOAB SLAIN—SHIMEI CONFINED TO JERUSALEM—SHIMEI PUT TO DEATH.

THEN sat Solomon upon the throne of David his father, and his kingdom was established greatly.

And Adonijah the son of Haggith came to Bath-sheba, the mother of Solomon, and she said, Comest thou peaceably? And he said, Peaceably.

He said moreover, I have something to say unto thee. And she said, Say on.

And he said, Thou knowest that the kingdom was mine, and that all Israel set their faces on me, that I should reign: howbeit the kingdom is turned about, and is become my brother's: for it was his from the LORD.

And now I ask one petition of thee, deny me not. And she said unto him, Say on.

And

And he said, Speak, I pray thee unto Solomon the king (for he will not say thee nay) that he give me Abishag the Shunammite to wife.

Bath-sheba therefore went unto king Solomon, to speak unto him for Adonijah: and the king rose up to meet her, and bowed himself unto her, and sat down on his throne, and caused a seat to be set for the king's mother; and she sat on his right hand.

Then she said, I desire one small petition of thee, I pray thee say me not nay. And the king said unto her, Ask on, my mother, for I will not say thee nay.

And she said, Let Abishag the Shunammite be given to Adonijah thy brother to wife.

And king Solomon answered and said unto his mother, And why dost thou ask Abishag the Shunammite for Adonijah? ask for him the kingdom also; (for he is mine elder brother) even for him; and for Abiathar the priest, and for Joab the son of Zeruiah.

Then king Solomon sware by the LORD, saying, GOD do so to me, and more also, if Adonijah have not spoken this word against his own life.

Now

Now therefore, as the LORD liveth, which hath established me, and set me on the throne of David my father, and who hath made me an house, as he promised, Adonijah shall be put to death this day.

And king Solomon sent by the hand of Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and he fell upon him that he died.

And unto Abiathar the priest said the king, Get thee to Anaithoth, unto thine own fields, for thou art worthy of death: but I will not at this time put thee to death, because thou barest the ark of the LORD God before David my father, and because thou hast been afflicted in all wherein my father was afflicted.

So Solomon thrust out Abiathar from being priest unto the LORD; that he might fulfil the word of the LORD, which he spake concerning the house of Eli in Shiloh.

Then tidings came to Joab, (for Joab had turned after Adonijah, though he turned not after Absalom) and Joab fled unto the tabernacle of the LORD, and caught hold on the horns of the altar.

And it was told king Solomon that Joab was fled unto the tabernacle of the LORD,
and

and behold he is by the altar: then Solomon sent Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, saying, Go fall upon him.

And Benaiah came to the tabernacle of the LORD, and said unto him, Thus saith the king, Come forth. And he said, Nay, but I will die here. And Benaiah brought the king word again, saying, Thus said Joab, and thus he answered me.

And the king said unto him, Do as he hath said, and fall upon him, and bury him; that thou mayest take away the innocent blood which Joab shed, from me, and from the house of my father.

And the LORD shall return his blood upon his own head, who fell upon two men more righteous and better than he, and slew them with the sword, my father David not knowing thereof, to wit, Abner the son of Ner, captain of the host of Israel, and Amasa the son of Jether, captain of the host of Judah.

Their blood shall therefore return upon the head of Joab, and upon the head of his seed for ever: but upon David, and upon his seed, and upon his house, and upon his throne shall there be peace for ever from the LORD.

So

So Benaiah the son of Jehoiada went up, and fell upon him, and slew him; and he was buried in his own house in the wilderness.

And the king put Benaiah the son of Jehoiada in his room over the host; and Zadok the priest did the king put in the room of Abiathar.

And the king sent and called for Shimei, and said unto him, Build thee an house in Jerusalem, and dwell there, and go not forth thence any whither.

For it shall be, that on the day thou goest out, and passest over the brook Kidron, thou shalt know for certain, that thou shalt surely die: thy blood shall be upon thine own head.

And Shimei said unto the king, The saying is good: as my lord the king hath said, so will thy servant do. And Shimei dwelt in Jerusalem many days.

And it came to pass at the end of three years, that two of the servants of Shimei ran away unto Achish the son of Maachah king of Gath: and they told Shimei, saying, Behold thy servants be in Gath.

And Shimei arose and saddled his asse, and went to Gath to Achish to seek his servants:

vants: and Shimei went and brought his servants from Gath.

And it was told Solomon that Shimei had gone from Jerusalem to Gath, and was come again.

And the king sent and called for Shimei, and said unto him, Did I not make thee to swear by the LORD, and protested unto thee, saying, Know for a certain, that on the day thou goest out, and walkest abroad any whither, that thou shalt surely die? and thou saidst unto me, The word that I have heard, is good.

Why then hast thou not kept the oath of the LORD, and the commandment that I have charged thee with?

The king said moreover to Shimei, Thou knowest all the wickedness which thine heart is privy to, that thou didst to David my father: therefore the LORD shall return thy wickedness upon thine own head;

And king Solomon shall be blessed, and the throne of David shall be established before the LORD for ever.

So the king commanded Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, which went out and fell upon him, that he died: and the kingdom was established in the hand of Solomon.

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ANNOTATIONS AND REFLECTIONS.

No sooner was Solomon seated on the throne, than Adonijah began to renew his scheme of dispossessing him; and with this view he desired to have Abishag, who had formerly been one of David's wives. Solomon promised him when he fled to the altar on a former occasion, "*that if he would shew himself a worthy man, he should remain in safety; but that if there was any way of wickedness in him, he should surely die:*" therefore Solomon was fully justified in causing him to be put to death, since *the welfare of the publick* required it; and it was Solomon's duty to put the law of God *exactly* in execution against *all* offenders, without having respect to affinity of blood; because he sat in the throne of the LORD JEHOVAH *over Israel*, and was not at *liberty* to consult his *own inclinations* in respect to the punishment of those who wished to dispossess the LORD's *vicegerent*.

As for Joab, he soon gave proofs of his disloyalty, and furnished Solomon with a fair pretence for condemning him to death for treasonable practices; but it seems, that he had before resolved to punish him for the murders of Abner and Amasa: whoever recollects the cruel circumstances with which Joab perpetrated those crimes, must own, that it would have been a great encouragement to wickedness, if the *gray hairs* of such a notorious sinner, had been suffered *to go down to the grave in peace*.

Abiathar, as high priest, should have devoted himself entirely to the service of God, instead of co-operating

with

with those who were endeavouring to supersede the king appointed by the LORD, therefore he was unworthy to fill that holy office; but in reverence to the LORD, Solomon forbore to put him to death. Abiathar was the last priest of the house of Eli. Zadok was a descendant of Eleazar. You must not suppose that there were *two* high-priests in the time of David, contrary to the original institution, though Zadok and Abiathar are sometimes mentioned together; but we may suppose, that on account of the Ark being in one place, and the brazen altar for burnt-sacrifices at another, the high-priest had an assistant. Abiathar seems to have had the pre-eminence till the latter end of David's reign, when he was rejected for opposing God's will in respect to Solomon's succession to the crown; and Zadok was *anointed*, but did not take the office upon him, till Solomon divested Abiathar of it, as you have read.

By the reverence which Solomon shewed to his mother, we may conclude, that he would have complied with her request if it had been lawful for him to do so: but Bathsheba had never considered the consequences of it; and therefore we may conclude, readily absolved him from his promise, when she was taught to see Adonijah's petition in a proper light.

Achish the king of Gath, had been so great a friend to David, that though David had conquered the Philistines, he suffered him still to retain the title of a king, and only made him tributary; so that there was a friendly correspondence between his city and Jerusalem, by which means Shimei might easily hear that his servants were there; but should have sent another

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to seek them, for he certainly drew his punishment upon his own head, because he was warned of the consequences of presuming to go out of Jerusalem, and gave reason for suspicions of his having seditious purposes in view.

I have already explained to you, my dear, what is supposed to be the true interpretation of David's dying injunction respecting Shimei; and make no doubt you are glad to find that Solomon, who was the *wisest of men*, put the same construction on his father's words: his treatment of Shimei, surely furnishes us with a sufficient answer to those who censure David on this head*.

* I have hitherto avoided the discussion of Bathsheba's character, for the same reasons which deterred me from entering into every particular of David's conduct in respect to Uriah; but it may be necessary to observe, that it appears from Solomon's respectful treatment of her, and from some expressions in the Proverbs, that she was in her general behaviour an amiable woman; not that this *justifies her crime*, she certainly was a partaker in David's sin, and we may conclude, a partner also in his sorrow, remorse, and chastisement.

It is a needless question to enquire, why David was not commanded to put her away, since we have in the *New Testament* clear and express laws in respect to adulterers; and therefore have no occasion to refer to David's history in this particular: if we do, it should be with a view to observe the unhappy consequences of his deviations from the marriage law, instituted at the creation: the custom of the age authorized in some degree a plurality of wives; but whoever considers the tenderness of his disposition, and his particular fondness for his sons, may conceive that he would have enjoyed more domestick happiness had they been all the children of one mother.

S E C T. XLIII.

SOLOMON'S SACRIFICES AT GIBEON—His
DREAM.

AND Solomon the son of David was strengthened in his kingdom, and the LORD his GOD was with him, and magnified him exceedingly.

And Solomon loved the LORD, walking in the statutes of David his father: only he sacrificed and burnt incense in high places.

Then Solomon spake unto all Israel, to the captains of thousands and of hundreds, and to the judges, and to every governor in all Israel, the chief of the fathers.

So Solomon and all the congregation with him went to the high place that was at Gibeon: for there was the tabernacle of the congregation of GOD, which Moses the servant of the LORD had made in the wilderness.

But the ark of GOD had David brought up from Kirjath-jearim to the place which

David

had prepared for it: for he had pitched a tent for it at Jerusalem.

Moreover, the brazen altar that Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur had made, he put before the tabernacle of the LORD: and Solomon and the congregation sought unto it.

And Solomon went up thither to the brazen altar before the LORD, which was at the tabernacle of the congregation, and offered a thousand burnt-offerings upon it.

In Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night: and God said, Ask what I shall give thee.

And Solomon said, Thou hast shewed unto thy servant David my father great mercy, according as he walked before thee in truth and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with thee, and thou hast kept for him this great kindness, that thou hast given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day.

And now, O LORD my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: and I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in.

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And thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude.

Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart, to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?

And the speech pleased the LORD, that Solomon had asked this thing.

And GOD said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life, neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies, but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment;

Behold I have done according to thy words: lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart, so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee.

And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches and honour: so that there cannot be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days.

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And if thou wilt walk in my ways, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as thy father David did walk, then I will lengthen thy days.

And Solomon awoke, and behold, it was a dream: and he came to Jerusalem, and stood before the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and offered up burnt-offerings, and offered peace-offerings, and made a feast to all his servants.

ANNOTATIONS AND REFLECTIONS.

Notwithstanding David had taken such extraordinary pains to establish the *publick worship of God* at JERUSALEM, it still remained *irregular* in some instances; particularly in respect to *sacrificing on HIGH PLACES*, which custom was practised by Abraham and the rest of the patriarchs through *necessity*, as the wandering lives they led would not admit of a *settled* place; and therefore, every *high hill* and every *grove*, where these faithful servants assembled their families in order to perform their devotions to ALMIGHTY GOD, was *sanctified* by HIS *acceptance* of their *offerings*, and became in the *general sense of the word* the HOUSE of GOD to them. As soon as the ARK was deposited in the TABERNACLE, and *holy ordinances* were appointed by the LORD, it became *unlawful* for the Israelites to offer burnt-sacrifices at any *other place* but the BRAZEN ALTAR; and that the people might have an opportunity

nity of resorting to it on proper occasions, the Tabernacle, with the Ark, and all the appurtenances of holy worship, were *carried about* and *set up*, wherever the children of Israel *rested* during their journeyings towards the land of Canaan, till at length it was *fixed at SHILOH*.

You have read, my dear, how greatly this sinful people *corrupted* the worship of God, by mixing with *idolatrous nations*; and know, that when the goodness of God *recalled* them to a sense of their duty by *chastisements*, they soon drew his anger upon them again by *fresh provocations*, so that the DIVINE PRESENCE did not constantly *abide* with them; for the ARK was *neglected*, and few thought, or desired to have recourse to it; but instead of that, many who *professed* to adore the *true* God, worshipped him according to the customs and rites which other nations practised toward *idols*.

The Israelites had preserved the Tabernacle, with the very brazen altar, &c. made according to the directions of Moses, by Bezaleel, and fixed it at Gibeon, where the sons of Eli had brought it into disrepute, by their abominable profanations; and made the people suppose, that their sacrifices might be more *efficacious*, if offered on altars, erected where their *forefathers* had sacrificed. Numbers however still resorted to the *sacred Altar*; but the service was *incomplete*, as the Ark was separated from it; and even the prophet Samuel, in compliance with the custom of the times, *offered sacrifices on HIGH PLACES*.

You know, my dear, with what solemnity David conducted the *Ark* to Jerusalem; and there is no doubt
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but that it was his intention to remove the *Tabernacle* also, had he been permitted to execute his purpose of building a *Temple*; but as he was commanded to consign that work to his son, he contented himself with giving directions concerning every particular to Solomon, who continued to follow the *usual mode of worship*, till such time as the *House of the Lord* should be built: you find however, that he went to GIBEON, in order to add all possible solemnity to his *GREAT sacrifice*. It is supposed, from the number of oxen, &c. which Solomon is said to have offered at Gibeon, that he *extended the festival*; and instead of keeping it *seven days*, as the law required, continued sacrificing *every day*, till he had offered the number of victims related.

It is very probable, that during this solemnity Solomon made those excellent reflections which he has left for the instruction of mankind in the *Book of Wisdom*; they are all well worth your serious consideration; but I shall at present select only a few, which throw light on this particular part of his history.

KING SOLOMON'S MEDITATIONS AND PRAYER*.

Wisdom reacheth from one end to another mightily: and sweetly doth she order all things.

In that she is conversant with GOD, she magnifieth her nobility: yea, the LORD of all things himself loved her.

For she is privy to the mysteries of the knowledge of GOD, and a lover of his works.

* *Wisdom of Solomon*, chap. viii. 1, 3, &c. ix.

If riches be a possession to be desired in this life: what is richer than wisdom that worketh all things?

And if prudence work, who of all that are, is a more cunning workman than she?

And if a man love righteousness, her labours are virtues: for she teacheth temperance and prudence, justice and fortitude, which are such things as men can have nothing more profitable in their life.

If a man desire much experience, she knoweth things of old, and conjectureth aright what is to come: she knoweth the subtilties of speeches, and can expound dark sentences: she foreseeeth signs and wonders, and the events of seasons and times.

Therefore I purpose to take her to live with me, knowing that she will be a counsellor of good things, and a comfort in cares and grief.

For her sake I shall have estimation among the multitude and honour with the elders, though I be young.

I shall be found of a quick conceit in judgment, and shall be admired in the sight of great men.

When I hold my tongue they shall bide my leisure; and when I speak they shall give good ear unto me: if I talk much, they shall lay their hands upon their mouth.

Moreover, by the means of her, I shall obtain immortality, and leave behind me an everlasting memorial to them that come after me.

I shall set the people in order, and the nations shall be subject unto me.

Horrible tyrants shall be afraid when they do but hear of me, I shall be found good among the multitude, and valiant in war.

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After I am come into mine house, I will repose myself with her: for her conversation hath no bitterness; and to live with her, hath no sorrow, but mirth and joy.

Now when I considered these things in myself, and pondered them in mine heart, how that to be allied unto wisdom, is immortality.

And great pleasure it is to have her friendship; and in the works of her hands are infinite riches, and in the exercise of conference with her, prudence: and in talking with her a good report: I went about seeking how to take her to me.

Nevertheless, when I perceived that I could not otherwise obtain her, except GOD gave her me, (and that was a point of wisdom also to know whose gift she was) I prayed unto the LORD, and besought him, and with my whole heart I said:

O GOD of my fathers, and LORD of mercy, who hast made all things with thy word,

And ordained man through thy wisdom, that he should have dominion over the creatures which thou hast made.

And order the world according to equity and righteousness, and execute judgment with an upright heart.

Give me wisdom that sitteth by thy throne, and reject me not from among thy children:

For I thy servant, and son of thine handmaid, am a feeble person, and of a short time, and too young for the understanding of judgment and laws.

For though a man be never so perfect among the children of men; yet if thy wisdom be not with him, he shall be nothing regarded.

Thou hast chosen me to be a king of thy people, and a judge of thy sons and daughters :

Thou hast commanded me to build a temple upon thy holy mount, and an altar in the city wherein thou dwellest, a resemblance of the holy tabernacle which thou hast prepared from the beginning :

And wisdom was with thee : which knoweth thy works, and was present when thou madest the world, and knew what was acceptable in thy sight, and right in thy commandments.

O send her out of thy holy heavens, and from the throne of thy glory, that being present she may labour with me, that I may know what is pleasing unto thee.

For she knoweth and understandeth all things, and she shall lead me soberly in my doings, and preserve me in her power.

So shall my works be acceptable, and then shall I judge thy people righteously, and be worthy to sit in my father's seat.

For what man is he that can know the counsel of God? or who can think what the will of the LORD is?

For the thoughts of mortal men are miserable, and our devices are but uncertain.

For the corruptible body presseth down the soul, and the earthy tabernacle weigheth down the mind that museth upon many things.

And hardly do we guess aright at things that are upon earth, and with labour do we find the things that are before us : but the things that are in heaven, who hath searched out?

And thy counsel who hath known? except thou give wisdom, and send thy holy Spirit from above.

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SOLOMON'S DREAM. 321

For so the ways of them which lived on the earth were reformed; and men were taught the things that are pleasing unto thee, and were saved through wisdom.

This we may reasonably conjecture was Solomon's prayer when he retired to rest at Gibeon; and as it was perfectly consistent with the divine will, it pleased the LORD to keep the faculties of his UNDERSTANDING awake by a miraculous power, after his SENSES were in respect to worldly affairs locked up in sleep; by which means Solomon retained the IDEAS that had before occupied his mind, and continued his devotions in the manner you read in the scripture part of this section, (which you find is exactly to the same effect) on which it pleased the ALMIGHTY to appear to him. When Solomon awaked, he was satisfied in respect to the reality of this vision, which must have been very different from a common dream; nor could he possibly mistake, for without doubt, those appearances by which GOD manifested his DIVINE PRESENCE, were very different from any thing that the creation furnishes to our view, or the most lively imagination can conceive. We read indeed of God's appearing in fire in a cloud, in the human form, &c. but the DEITY was always displayed by some circumstance which served to distinguish the CREATOR from the creature.

Solomon was farther convinced by the enlargement of his capacity, that the LORD had granted the desire of his heart; for he was not only endued with abilities to discharge the duties of his exalted station, but to acquire astonishing knowledge of the whole circle of hu-

man arts and sciences * ; and as a farther reward for his proper request, and encouragement to keep in the path of WISDOM, the LORD vouchsafed to renew the covenant he had formerly made in his name with DAVID.

The WISDOM for which Solomon prayed, was a power to discern between good and bad, that he might be enabled to act on all occasions, conformably to the rules of piety and justice : this wisdom he received by the immediate inspiration of God ; but even the humblest christian may now attain it by the study of the Scriptures ; for Solomon, and other inspired men, were taught this secret of the LORD, not merely for their own sakes, but that they might teach it to all who are desirous of knowing it. That you may judge of the value of WISDOM, I will, before we proceed in the history, shew you, my dear, how highly it was prized by Solomon.

KING SOLOMON'S INSTRUCTIONS CONCERNING THE VALUE OF TRUE WISDOM.

Hear ye children the instructions of a father, and attend to know understanding. For I give you good doctrine, forsake you not my law.

I was my father's son, tender and only beloved in the sight of my mother ; he taught me also, and said unto me, let thy heart retain my words, keep my commandments and live.

Get wisdom, get understanding : forsake her not, and she shall preserve thee ; love her, and she shall keep thee :

* See Wisdom of Solomon, chap. vii.

she shall give to thine head an ornament of grace; a crown of glory shall she deliver to thee.

Wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that can be desired, are not to be compared to it.

Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil. The fear of the LORD, is the beginning of wisdom; and the knowledge of the HOLY, is understanding. The fear of the LORD, is to hate evil, pride, and arrogancy.

Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not to thine own understanding: in all thy ways acknowledge him; and he shall direct thy paths. Put away from thee a froward mouth; and perverse lips put far from thee; that thou mayest walk in the way of good men, and keep the path of the righteous.

The way of the wicked is as darkness, they know not at what they stumble; but the path of the just, is as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

The curse of the LORD, is in the house of the wicked; but he blesteth the habitation of the just: surely he scorneth the scorner; but giveth grace unto the lowly.

Keep sound wisdom and discretion, so shall they be life unto thy soul: then shalt thou walk in thy way safely, and thy foot shall not stumble. When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid; yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet: for the LORD shall be thy confidence.

Happy is the man that findeth WISDOM, and the man that getteth UNDERSTANDING. Length of days are in her right hand; and in her left hand, riches and honour. Her ways are ways of pleasantness; and all her paths are

peace. She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her ; and happy is every one that retaineth her.

What you have just read, my dear, is a small portion of the Book of Proverbs, which consists of a collection of wise maxims, written by king Solomon : you may judge of the value of this work, by the specimen I have produced ; and I dare say, will peruse the whole of it with diligent attention and delight, when you have gone through the *historical* part of the scriptures : it will be sufficient to point out to you at present, that by WISDOM and UNDERSTANDING, Solomon *evidently* meant RELIGIOUS WISDOM ; that is to say, a *knowledge of the will of God, and of the various duties he requires us to perform.* By the FEAR * of the LORD, which is said to be the *beginning* of this WISDOM, you are to understand, a just and proper notion and conception of God, founded on *reverence, admiration, honour and love of God ;* which will incline us to *seek his protection and favour, and induce us to put our whole trust and confidence in his infinite mercy and goodness.* This TRUST in God will naturally be productive of *peace and tranquillity of mind,* and will certainly obtain the *blessing of God,* which will render the practice of RELIGIOUS DUTIES *pleasant and delightful* to us ; and lead us at length, to the attainment of EVERLASTING *happiness :* so that Solomon might truly say, “ RELIGION IS A TREE OF LIFE to all that lay hold upon her, and happy is every one who retaineth her ! ”

I hope, my dear, you are by this time convinced of the value of *true wisdom ;* let me therefore earnestly

* Bishop Sherlock's Sermons.

persuade

persuade you to learn its precepts: they are scattered through the sacred writings, like stars in the firmament; each separately viewed, affords only a gentle glimmering light; but if you can collect their rays, they will enlighten your mind, so that you cannot mistake the path that leads to the regions of bliss. May that ALMIGHTY BEING, who is the *fountain of all* WISDOM, assist you in the important pursuit!

SECT.

S E C T. XLIV.

KING SOLOMON'S WISE JUDGMENT.

THEN came two women unto the king, and stood before him.

And one woman said, O my lord, this woman and I dwell in one house: and we were together, and there was no stranger with us in the house.

And this woman's child died in the night; because she overlaid it.

And she arose at midnight, and took my son from beside me, while thine handmaid slept, and laid it in her bosom, and laid her dead child in my bosom.

And when I rose in the morning to give my child suck, behold it was dead: but when I had considered it in the morning, behold, it was not my son, which I did bear.

And the other woman said, Nay; but the living is my son, and the dead is thy son: and this said, No; but the dead is thy son, and the living is my son. Thus they spake before the king.

SOLOMON'S JUDGMENT. 327

Then said the king, The one saith, This is my son that liveth, and thy son is the dead: and the other saith, Nay; but thy son is the dead, and my son is the living.

And the king said, Bring me a sword, And they brought a sword before the king.

And the king said, Divide the living child in two, and give half to the one, and half to the other.

Then spake the woman whose the living child was, unto the king, (for her bowels yearned upon her son) and she said, O my lord, give her the living child, and in no wise slay it: but the other said, Let it be neither mine nor thine, but divide it.

Then the king answered and said, Give her the living child, and in no wise slay it: she is the mother thereof.

And all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had judged, and they feared the king: for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him, to do judgment.

ANNOTATIONS AND REFLECTIONS.

The dispute between the two women was of such an intricate nature, as to require uncommon penetration

to

328 SOLOMON'S JUDGMENT.

to unravel it; for each asserted her right to the living child with equal earnestness, and there were no witnesses to strengthen the claim of either party: Solomon however, thought of an expedient which effectually discovered the real parent. That careless wretch who had overlaid her own child, and to cover her guilt had stolen her neighbour's, readily consented to the proposal of dividing the infant; but paternal love abhorred the shocking idea; and the tender mother, solicitous at all events, to preserve the life of her little darling, submitted, though not without the severest pangs, to resign it to her adversary. From what a weight of woe was her afflicted mind relieved, when she heard the king's gracious commands to deliver the child to her; which she doubtless pressed to her bosom with raptures of delight, whilst her grateful tongue implored blessings on Solomon!

The * young king gained great reputation by this wise decision, which procured him the reverence of his subjects, who were afraid of doing an unjust thing, when they saw that *the wisdom with which God had promised to endue him, was in him*; and on this account they both loved and feared him.

* Henry's Annotations.

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S E C T. XLV.

SOLOMON'S WISDOM—His PRINCES—His
DAILY PROVISIONS—THE EXTENT OF HIS
KINGDOM.

AND Solomon was king over all Israel. And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding, exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea-shore.

And Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country, and all the wisdom of Egypt.

And these were the princes which he had. Azariah the son of Zadok the priest. Elioreph and Ahiah the sons of Shisha, scribes. Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud, the recorder.

And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was over the host: and Zadok was high-priest. And Azariah the son of Nathan was over the officers: and Zabud the son of Nathan was principal officer, and the king's friend.

And

And Ahisba was over the household : and Adoniram the son of Abda was over the tribute.

And Solomon had twelve officers over all Israel, which provided victuals for the king's household, and for all that came to king Solomon's table ; each man his month in a year. Barley and straw also for the horses and dromedaries, brought they unto the place where the officers were, each man according to his charge.

And Solomon's provision for one day, was thirty measures of fine flour, and threescore measures of meal.

Ten fat oxen, and twenty oxen out of the pastures, and an hundred sheep, beside harts and roe-bucks, and fallow-deer, and fatted fowl.

Judah and Israel were many, as the sand which is by the sea in multitude, eating and drinking, and making merry.

And Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine, and under his fig-tree, from Dan even to Beer-sheba, all the days of Solomon.

And Solomon reigned over all kingdoms, from the river unto the land of the Philistines,

lines, and unto the border of Egypt: they brought presents, and served Solomon all the days of his life. And he had peace on all sides round about him.

ANNOTATIONS AND REFLECTIONS.

The Egyptians and Chaldeans, were in the days of Solomon, renowned for wisdom, and yet he excelled them all: for the LORD enabled him, without the usual toil of study, to understand every branch of knowledge to which he applied his mind. He had likewise an extraordinary power of judging in respect to matters of prudence and policy, which he displayed in the arrangement of domestick affairs, and the regulation of his kingdom. By * having purveyors in every division of it, who provided for the king's household in regular rotation, industry was encouraged, and wealth diffused amongst his subjects, because all had their turn in respect to the sale of their different commodities; and every man dwelt safely, for the king invaded no one's property.

The number of kings who were tributary to Solomon, added also to the riches and grandeur of his kingdom; none of them offered to give him disturbance, but were happy in their dependance on such a monarch. His native subjects rejoiced in the ample performance of the promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; for they were multiplied to an astonishing degree, and put in possession of every means of happiness this world

* Henry's Annotations.

could

could afford; so that they had no cause to be solicitous for any thing, but to secure the *blessing of the Lord*, which they had been repeatedly assured would reward their *obedience*, and this blessing included the promise of *everlasting felicity*. “ *Happy were the people who were in such a case; yea, blessed were the people who had the LORD for their God!*”

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S E C T. XLVI.

HIRAM KING OF TYRE SENDETH TO CONGRATULATE SOLOMON—THEY MAKE AN ALLIANCE TOGETHER.

AND Hiram king of Tyre sent his servants unto Solomon; (for he had heard that they had anointed him king in the room of his father) for Hiram was ever a lover of David.

And Solomon sent to Hiram, saying, Behold I build an house for the name of the LORD my GOD, to dedicate it to him.

Thou knowest how that David my father could not build an house unto the name of the LORD his GOD, for the wars which were about him on every side, until the LORD put them under the soles of his feet.

But now the LORD my GOD hath given me rest on every side, so that there is neither adversary, nor evil occurrent.

And behold, I propose to build an house unto the name of the LORD my GOD, as the
LORD

LORD spake unto David my father, saying, Thy son, whom I will set upon thy throne in thy room, he shall build an house unto my name.

And the house which I build is great: for great is our GOD above all gods.

But who is able to build him an house, seeing the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain him? who am I then that I should build him an house, save only to burn sacrifice before him?

Send me now therefore a man cunning to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in iron, and in purple, and crimson, and blue, and that can skill to grave with the cunning men that are with me in Judah and in Jerusalem, whom David my father did provide.

Send me also cedar-trees, fir-trees, and al-gum-trees, out of Lebanon; for I know that thy servants can skill to cut timber in Lebanon: and behold my servants shall be with thy servants,

Even to prepare me timber in abundance for the house which I am about to build, shall be wonderful great.

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And behold, I will give to thy servants, the hewers that cut timber, twenty thousand measures of beaten wheat, and twenty thousand measures of barley, and twenty thousand baths of wine, and twenty thousand baths of oil.

And Solomon sent to Hiram the king of Tyre, saying, As thou didst deal with David my father, and didst send him cedars to build him an house to dwell therein, even so deal with me.

And it came to pass when Hiram heard the words of Solomon, that he rejoiced greatly, and he answered in writing, saying,

Because the LORD hath loved his people, he hath made thee king over them.

Blessed be the LORD GOD of Israel that made heaven and earth, who hath given to David the king a wise son, endued with prudence and understanding, that might build an house for the LORD, and an house for his kingdom.

And Hiram sent to Solomon saying, I have considered the things that thou sentest to me for : and I will do all thy desire concerning timber of cedar, and concerning timber of fir.

And

And now I have sent a cunning man, endowed with understanding, of Hiram my father's ;

The son of a woman of the daughters of Dan, and his father was a man of Tyre ; skilful to work in gold and in silver, in brass, in iron, in stone, and in timber, in purple, in blue, and in fine linen, and in crimson ; also to grave any manner of graving, and to find out every device which shall be put to him, with thy cunning men, and with the cunning men of my lord David thy father.

Now therefore the wheat, and the barley, the oil, and the wine which my lord hath spoken of, let him send unto his servants :

And we will cut wood out of Lebanon, as much as thou shalt need : and we will bring it to thee in floats by sea, to Joppa ; and thou shalt carry it up to Jerusalem.

So Hiram gave Solomon cedar-trees, and fir-trees, according to all his desire.

And Solomon gave Hiram twenty thousand measures of wheat for food to his household, and twenty measures of pure oil : thus gave Solomon to Hiram year by year.

And they two made a league together. And king Solomon raised a levy out of all

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Israel; and the levy was thirty thousand men.

And he sent them to Lebanon, ten thousand a month by courses: a month they were in Lebanon, and two months at home: and Adoniram was over the levy.

And Solomon numbered all the strangers that were in the land of Israel, after the numbering wherewith David his father had numbered them; and they were found an hundred and fifty thousand and three thousand and six hundred.

And he set threescore and ten thousand of them to be bearers of burdens and fourscore thousand to be hewers in the mountain, and three thousand and six hundred overseers to set the people to work.

And all the people that were left of the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites, which were not of the children of Israel.

Their children that were left after them in the land, whom the children of Israel also were not able utterly to destroy, upon those did Solomon levy a tribute of bond service unto this day.

But of the children of Israel did Solomon make no bond-men : but they were men of war, and his servants, and his princes, and his captains, and rulers of his chariots, and his horsemen.

And the king commanded, and they brought great stones, costly stones, and hewed stones, to lay the foundation of the house.

And Solomon's builders, and Hiram's builders did hew them, and the stone-squarers : so they prepared timber and stones to build the house.

And Hiram king of Tyre furnished Solomon with gold according to his desire.

And king Solomon made a navy of ships in Ezion-geber, which is beside Eloth, on the shore of the Red-sea, in the land of Edom.

And Hiram sent in the navy his servants shipmen that had knowledge of the sea, with the servants of Solomon.

And they came to Ophir, and fet from thence gold four hundred and twenty talents and brought it to king Solomon.

And the navy also of Hiram that brought gold from Ophir, brought in from Ophir

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great plenty of almug-trees, and precious stones.

And Solomon had linen yarn brought out of Egypt: the king's merchants received the linen yarn at a price.

ANNOTATIONS AND REFLECTIONS.

I have already mentioned to you, my dear, that Tyre and Sidon were famous trading cities; they lay near the sea, in the border of Israel: their inhabitants had never been at enmity with Israel, excepting when they joined the general confederacy, and therefore David was not commissioned to destroy them. It is said of Hiram their king, (who is supposed to have been the son of that monarch who supplied David with materials for his city) *that he was ever a lover of David*; and we have reason to think that he was a worshipper of the true God, though he might not have had power to reform his subjects.

Lebanon was a noble forest in the north of Canaan, included in the grant of that land to Israel, so that Solomon was a proprietor of all its products; but his subjects, who had been mostly trained to war in David's time, were now chiefly employed in cultivating and dispensing the plenty of their land, and therefore, not skilled like the Sidonians, in arts and manufactures; but they were able to spare corn and other valuable commodities, in return for the assistance they required from their neighbours.

The alliance with Hiram was convenient to Solomon in another particular, of great consequence to his work; which was, the skill of the Tyrians in maritime affairs, in which it seems the Israelites were deficient. No nation in those days, was so well acquainted with navigation as we are at this time; for the use of the loadstone was as yet undiscovered, and having no compasses, they could not venture far out to sea, but made only coasting voyages, as they are called.

Huram, the man who was sent by Hiram, seems like Bezaleel, to have been endued with peculiar ingenuity, in order to qualify him for preparing the ornaments of the Temple; his assistance must have been esteemed by Solomon a valuable acquisition.

Those among the Canaanites who had embraced the true religion, were allowed to dwell with the Israelites, and there is no doubt but their lives were made comfortable to them; and by being employed in preparations for the temple, they were in some measure *sanctified*; for though a *laborious*, it was an *honourable* business; and on this account the Israelites thought it no disgrace to hew timber, and cut marble and stone, to be wrought by the Tyrian masons and carvers. Different workmen were employed in levelling mount Moriah, in order to prepare it for the foundation of the Temple.

From the interchange of commodities between Solomon and Hiram, we may take occasion to observe the great advantages of COMMERCE. GOD has scattered his bounty among all lands; but every country produces something *peculiar to itself*, and desirable to others, which leads men to travel from place to place,

BENEFITS OF COMMERCE. 341

In order to procure those conveniencies and delicacies which are not to be found at home ; and as they carry with them what others wish to possess, they are joyfully received, and willingly supplied : by this means the earth might become one great family, receiving assistance from their brethren, and sharing amongst them the gifts of their HEAVENLY FATHER. Those nations who live *secluded*, are generally savage and ferocious ; but commerce introduces the arts of civilization, and serves as a means of propagating true religion and humanity.

S E C T. XLVII.

THE BUILDING OF SOLOMON'S TEMPLE.

AND it came to pass in the four hundred and fourscore year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month Zif, which is the second month, that he began to build the house of the LORD.

In mount Moriah, where the LORD appeared unto David his father, in the threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite.

David had given to Solomon his son the pattern of all that he had received by the Spirit, also gold and silver by weight, for all instruments of every kind of service.

And the house when it was in building, was built of stone, made ready before it was brought thither: so that there was neither hammer, nor ax, nor any tool of iron heard in the house, while it was in building.

And the word of the LORD came to Solomon, saying,

Concerning

Concerning this house which thou art in building, if thou wilt walk in my statutes, and execute my judgments, and keep all my commandments to walk in them: then will I perform my word with thee, which I spake unto David thy father.

And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will not forsake my people Israel.

And he built the walls of the house within with boards of cedar, both the floor of the house, and the walls of the cieling: and he covered them on the inside with wood, and covered the floor of the house with planks of fir.

And the cedar of the house within was carved with knops, and open flowers: all was cedar, there was no stone seen; and overlaid the house within with pure gold.

And he garnished the house with precious stones for beauty: and the gold was gold of Parvaim.

And the oracle he prepared in the house within, to set there the ark of the covenant of the LORD.

And in the most holy house he made two cherubims of image work, and overlaid them with gold.

The wings of these cherubims spread themselves forth twenty cubits : and they stood on their feet, and their faces were inward.

And he made a partition before the oracle with chains of gold.

And he made the vail of blue, and purple, and crimson, and fine linen, and wrought cherubims thereon.

And he made also ten candlesticks of pure gold, and set five on the right hand, and five on the left, with their lamps before the oracle.

And for the entering of the oracle he made doors of olive-tree.

And against the wall of the house he built chambers round about, against the walls of the house round about, both of the temple, and of the oracle : and he made chambers round about. And Solomon built a porch before the temple.

And he cast two pillars of brass, and two chapiters of molten brass, to set upon the tops of the pillars ; and nets of chequer work, and wreaths of chain work, seven for one chapiter, and seven for the other, with pomegranates : and the chapiters were of lily work.

And he set up the pillars in the porch of the temple : and he set up the right pillar, and

and called the name thereof Jachin: and he set up the left pillar, and called the name thereof Boaz.

Moreover he made an altar of brass; also a molten sea, and under it was the similitude of oxen; it stood upon twelve, three looking towards the north, three towards the west, three towards the south, and three towards the east.

He made also ten lavers, and put five on the right hand, and five on the left, to wash in them: such things as they offered for the burnt-offering they washed in them; but the sea was for the priests to wash in.

He made also ten tables, and placed them in the temple, five on the right side, and five on the left. And he made an hundred basins of gold, and vessels in great abundance.

Furthermore he made the court of the priests, and the great court, and doors for the court overlaid with brass.

And he built the inner court round about with three rows of hewed stones, and a row of cedar beams.

And Solomon built the chambers round about, and the treasures of the house of God, and of the dedicated things, namely,

The meat-offerings, the frankincense, and the vessels, the tithes of the corn, the new wine and the oil, and the offerings of the priests.

And Solomon made a brazen scaffold, and set it in the midst of the court.

In the fourth year was the foundation of the house of the LORD laid, in the month Zif.

And the eleventh year, in the month Bul, (which is the eighth month) was the house finished, throughout all the parts thereof, and according to all the fashion of it: so was he seven years in building it.

ANNOTATIONS AND REFLECTIONS.

You have now, my dear, read a description of the magnificent temple which Solomon erected to the name of the LORD in Jerusalem.

The second day of the month Zif, on which it was begun, answered to our 27th of April. Mount Moriah, where it was situated, was either a part of mount Sion, or a hill of less compass near it. The front of the temple was turned towards the east.

It is not material to explain to you the exact dimensions of its several parts, you will judge that it was capacious; I shall therefore only take notice of a few particulars that require explanation,

There

There was great resemblance between the TABERNACLE which was made in the days of Moses, and Solomon's TEMPLE; only, as the former was designed to be occasionally removed, and the latter to be fixed, one was made of more durable materials than the other: their use was the same, to serve as a *repository* for the ARK of the TESTIMONY, which might be considered as GOD's *earthly* throne, on which he manifested his DIVINE PRESENCE.

Instead of the curtains and boards which composed the different apartments and courts of the tabernacle, the temple was built with the most costly stones and timber that could be procured, and ornamented with gold, silver, and jewels, *purchased* with the natural produce of that land which he had sanctified; and with these commodities were the foreign artificers also paid.

What is called the HOUSE or TEMPLE, answered to the HOLY PLACE, or SANCTUARY in the tabernacle. The ORACLE built for the reception of the ARK, was a square room within the temple. The VAIL served to divide the HOLY PLACE from the MOST HOLY, and there was a door besides. The PORCH which stood before the temple, added grandeur to the building; and it is supposed that there was a wall to separate them, so that the TEMPLE might stand wholly by itself, and also be shut up occasionally.

In respect to the number and uses of the CHAMBERS which were built against the wall of the HOUSE, it is not possible to come to any certainty; but as there was a stair-case from the temple, it is supposed that some of the *sacred things* were deposited there; and also that they served for the accommodation of the priests,

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to keep the utensils of the TEMPLE, and the sacred vestments; and also for the priests to eat their portion of the sacrifices in. Besides the chambers adjoining to the temple, there were others in the courts for various uses.

The two large pillars which Solomon erected, are supposed to have been *inscribed* with the words JACHIN and BOAZ, from whence they took their names. JACHIN, signified *HE shall establish*. BOAZ, *strength is in HIM*; intended to remind the king and people of their entire dependance on an ALMIGHTY power.

The PRIESTS court was separated from the court of the CONGREGATION, by a low wall, sufficient to keep the people from obstructing the business of the priests, but low enough for them to see without, what was doing within.

The BRAZEN SEA and LAVERS, were for the washings and purifications which the law required to be performed; and there were a great number of vessels besides; but it is not material to enlarge on their uses, as our religion does not enjoin us to offer sacrifices. You will, in the next Section read, for what purpose the BRAZEN SCAFFOLD was erected.

As no steps were allowed to go up to the altar which was placed in the midst of the court, it is supposed that there were easy ASCENTS to it, both for the king and people; the entrances to which were by GATES, of these there were three on three sides of the temple, east, north, and south; and two on the west. At one of the western gates was the KING's ascent, built in a very superb and costly manner; at the other western gate was a way for the people in general: at the fourth
gate

gate was the HOUSE OF ASUPPIM, supposed to be the place where the priests and Levites assembled at times, about business relating to the temple.

Solomon must have had great pleasure in erecting this noble edifice for such holy purposes; especially as the LORD vouchsafed to assure him, that on condition he would be mindful of the covenant made with David, HIS DIVINE PRESENCE would certainly *dwell* amongst his people, and never *forsake* them.

SECT.

S E C T. XLVIII.

THE DEDICATION OF SOLOMON'S TEMPLE.

THUS all the work that Solomon made for the house of the LORD was finished: and Solomon brought in all the things that David his father had dedicated; and the silver and the gold, and all the instruments put he among the treasuries of the house of God.

Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel, and all the heads of the tribes, the chief of the fathers of the children of Israel unto Jerusalem, to bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD out of the city of David, which is Zion.

Wherefore all the men of Israel assembled themselves unto the king in the feast, which was in the seventh month.

And all the elders of Israel came; and the Levites took up the ark.

And they brought up the ark, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and all the holy vessels

vessels that were in the tabernacle, these did the priests and the Levites bring up.

Also king Solomon and all the congregation of Israel that were assembled unto him before the ark, sacrificed sheep and oxen which could not be told nor numbered for multitude.

And the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the LORD unto his place, to the oracle of the house, into the most holy place, even under the wings of the cherubims.

For the cherubims spread forth their wings over the place of the ark, and the cherubims covered the ark and the staves thereof above.

And they drew out the staves of the ark, that the ends of the staves were seen from the ark before the oracle; but they were not seen without. And there it is unto this day.

There was nothing in the ark save the two tables which Moses put therein at Horeb, when the LORD made a covenant with the children of Israel, when they came out of Egypt.

And

And it came to pass when the priests were come out of the holy place : (for all the priests that were present were sanctified, and did not then wait by course :)

Also the Levites which were the singers, all of them of Asaph, of Heman, of Jeduthun, with their sons and their brethren, being arrayed in white linen, having cymbals and psalteries and harps, stood at the east end of the altar, and with them an hundred and twenty priests sounding with trumpets :

It came even to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the LORD ; and when they lift up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals, and instruments of music, and praised the LORD saying, For he is good : for his mercy endureth for ever : that then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the LORD ;

So that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud : for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of God.

Then said Solomon, the LORD hath said, that he would dwell in the thick darkness.

But I have built an house of habitation for thee, and a place for thy dwelling for ever.

And

And the king turned his face and blessed the whole congregation of Israel: and all the congregation of Israel stood.

And he said, Blessed be the LORD GOD of Israel who hath with his hands fulfilled that which he spake with his mouth to my father David, saying,

Since the day that I brought forth my people out of the land of Egypt, I chose no city among all the tribes of Israel to build an house in, that my name might be there; neither chose I any man to be ruler over my people Israel:

But I have chosen Jerusalem that my name might be there; and have chosen David to be over my people Israel:

Now it was in the heart of David my father to build an house for the name of the LORD GOD of Israel.

But the LORD said to David my father, Forasmuch as it was in thine heart to build an house for my name, thou didst well in that it was in thine heart:

Notwithstanding, thou shalt not build the house; but thy son which shall come forth out of thy loins, he shall build the house for my name.

The

The LORD therefore hath performed his word that he hath spoken : for I am risen up in the room of David my father, and am set on the throne of Israel, as the LORD promised, and have built the house for the name of the LORD GOD of Israel.

And in it have I put the ark ; wherein is the covenant of the LORD that he made with the children of Israel.

And he stood before the altar of the LORD in the presence of all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands ;

For Solomon had made a brazen scaffold, of five cubits long, and five cubits broad, and three cubits high, and had set it in the midst of the court : and upon it he stood, and kneeled down upon his knees before all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands towards heaven,

And said, O LORD GOD of Israel, there is no God like thee in the heaven, nor in the earth ; which keepest covenant, and shewest mercy unto thy servants, that walk before thee with all their hearts :

Thou which hast kept with thy servant David my father that which thou hast promised him ; and spakest with thy mouth, and

and hast fulfilled it with thine hand, as it is this day.

Now therefore, O LORD GOD of Israel, keep with thy servant David, my father, that which thou hast promised him, saying, There shall not fail thee a man in my sight to sit upon the throne of Israel; yet so that thy children take heed to their way to walk in my law, as thou hast walked before me.

Now then, O LORD GOD of Israel let thy word be verified which thou hast spoken unto thy servant David.

But will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth! behold, heaven, and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house which I have built?

Have respect therefore to the prayer of thy servant, and to his supplication, O LORD my God, to hearken unto the cry and the prayer which thy servant prayeth before thee:

That thine eyes may be open upon this house day and night, upon the place whereof thou hast said, that thou wouldest put thy name there; to hearken unto the prayer which thy servant prayeth towards this place.

Hearken therefore unto the supplications of thy servant and of thy people Israel, which they

they shall make towards this place: hear thou from thy dwelling-place, even from heaven; and when thou hearest, forgive.

If a man sin against his neighbour, and an oath be laid upon him to make him swear, and the oath come before thine altar in this house;

Then hear thou from heaven, and do, and judge thy servants, by requiting the wicked, by recompensing his way upon his own head, and by justifying the righteous, by giving him according to his righteousness.

And if thy people Israel be put to the worse before the enemy, because they have sinned against thee; and shall return and confess thy name, and pray and make supplication before thee in this house;

Then hear thou from the heavens, and forgive the sin of thy people Israel, and bring them again unto the land which thou gavest to them and to their fathers.

When the heaven is shut up, and there is no rain, because they have sinned against thee; yet if they pray towards this place and confess thy name, and turn from their sin when thou dost afflict them,

Then

Then hear thou from heaven, and forgive the sin of thy servants, and of thy people Israel, when thou hast taught them the good way wherein they should walk; and send rain upon thy land which thou hast given unto thy people for an inheritance.

If there be dearth in the land, if there be pestilence, if there be blasting, or mildew, locusts, or caterpillars: if their enemies besiege them in the cities of their land; whatsoever fore, or whatsoever sickness there be:

Then what prayer or what supplication soever shall be made of any man, or of all thy people Israel, when every one shall know his own fore and his own grief, and shall spread forth his hands in this house:

Then hear thou from heaven thy dwelling-place, and forgive, and render unto every man according unto all his ways, whose heart thou knowest; (for thou only knowest the hearts of the children of men:)

That they may fear thee, to walk in thy ways, so long as they live in the land which thou gavest unto our fathers.

Moreover concerning the stranger, which is not of thy people Israel, but is come from a far country for thy great name's sake, and thy

thy mighty hand, and thy stretched out arm; if they come and pray in this house :

Then hear thou from the heavens, even from thy dwelling-place, and do according to all that the stranger calleth to thee for; that all people of the earth may know thy name, and fear thee, as doth thy people Israel, and may know that this house which I have built is called by thy name.

If thy people go out to war against their enemies by the way that thou shalt send them, and they pray unto thee toward this city which thou hast chosen, and the house which I have built for thy name ;

Then hear thou from the heavens, their prayer and their supplication, and maintain their cause.

If they sin against thee, (for there is no man which sinneth not,) and thou be angry with them, and deliver them over before their enemies, and they carry them away captives unto a land far off or near ;

Yet if they bethink themselves in the land whither they are carried captive, and turn and pray unto thee in the land of their captivity, saying, We have sinned, we have done amiss, and have dealt wickedly ;

If they return to thee with all their heart and with all their soul in the land of their captivity, whither they have carried them captives, and pray towards their land which thou gavest unto their fathers, and toward the city which thou hast chosen, and toward the house which I have built for thy name :

Then hear thou their prayer and their supplication in heaven thy dwelling-place, and maintain their cause,

And forgive thy people that have sinned against thee, and all their transgressions wherein they have transgressed against thee, and give them compassion before them who carried them captive, that they may have compassion on them :

For they be thy people and thine inheritance, which thou broughtest forth out of Egypt, from the midst of the furnace of iron :

That thine eyes may be open unto the supplication of thy servant, and unto the supplication of thy people Israel, to hearken unto them in all that they call for unto thee.

Then hear thou from the heavens, even from thy dwelling-place, their prayer and their supplications, and maintain their cause,

and

and forgive thy people which have sinned against thee.

Now my GOD, let, I beseech thee, thine eyes be open, and let thine ears be attent unto the prayer that is made in this place.

Now therefore arise, O LORD GOD, into thy resting-place, thou, and the ark of thy strength: let thy priests, O LORD GOD be clothed with salvation, and let thy saints rejoice in goodness.

O LORD GOD, turn not away the face of thine anointed: remember the mercies of David thy servant.

For thou didst separate them from among all the people of the earth, to be thine inheritance, as thou spakest by the hand of Moses thy servant, when thou broughtest our fathers out of Egypt, O LORD GOD.

And it was so, that when Solomon had made an end of praying all this prayer and supplication unto the LORD, he arose from before the altar of the LORD, from kneeling on his knees, with his hands spread up to heaven.

And he stood, and blessed all the congregation of Israel, with a loud voice, saying,

Blessed be the LORD, that hath given rest unto his people Israel, according to all that he promised: there hath not failed one word of all his good promise, which he promised by the hand of Moses his servant.

The LORD our GOD be with us, as he was with our fathers: let him not leave us nor forsake us:

That he may incline our hearts unto him, to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and his statutes, and his judgments, which he commanded our fathers.

And let these my words wherewith I have made supplication before the LORD, be nigh unto the LORD our GOD day and night, that he maintain the cause of his servant, and the cause of his people Israel at all times, as the matter shall require:

That all the people of the earth may know that the LORD is GOD, and that there is none else.

Let your heart therefore be perfect with the LORD our GOD, to walk in his statutes, and to keep his commandments, as at this day.

And the king, and all Israel with him, offered sacrifice before the LORD.

Now when Solomon had made an end of praying, the fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt-offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the LORD filled the house.

And the priests could not enter into the house of the LORD, because the glory of the LORD had filled the LORD's house.

And when all the children of Israel saw how the fire came down, and the glory of the LORD upon the house, they bowed themselves with their faces to the ground upon the pavement, and worshipped, and praised the LORD, saying, For he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever.

Then the king and all the people offered sacrifices before the LORD.

And the priests waited on their offices: the Levites also with instruments of music of the LORD, which David the king had made to praise the LORD, because his mercy endureth for ever, when David praised by their ministry: and the priests sounded trumpets before them, and all Israel stood.

Moreover

Moreover, Solomon hallowed the middle of the court that was before the house of the LORD: for there he offered burnt offerings, and the fat of the peace-offerings, because the brazen altar which Solomon had made was not able to receive the burnt-offerings, and the meat-offerings, and the fat.

Also at the same time Solomon kept the feast seven days, and all Israel with him, a very great congregation, from the entering in of Hamath unto the river of Egypt.

And in the eighth day they made a solemn assembly: for they kept the dedication of the altar seven days, and the feast seven days.

And on the three and twentieth day of the seventh month he sent the people away into their tents, glad and merry in heart for the goodness that the LORD had shewed unto David, and to Solomon, and to Israel his people.

Thus Solomon finished the house of the LORD, and the king's house: and all that came into Solomon's heart to make in the house of the LORD, and in his own house, he prosperously effected.

And the LORD appeared to Solomon by night, and said unto him, I have heard thy prayer, and have chosen this place to myself for an house of sacrifice.

If I shut up heaven that there be no rain, or if I command the locusts to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among my people :

If my people which are called by my name, shall humble themselves and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways ; then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

Now mine eyes shall be open, and mine ears attent unto the prayer that is made in this place.

For now I have chosen and sanctified this house, that my name may be there for ever, and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually.

And as for thee, if thou wilt walk before me, as David thy father walked, and do according to all that I have commanded thee, and shalt observe my statutes and my judgments ;

Then will I stablish the throne of thy kingdom, according as I have covenanted

with

with David thy father, saying, There shall not fail thee a man to be ruler in Israel.

But if ye turn away and forsake my statutes and my commandments which I have set before you, and shall go and serve other gods, and worship them.

Then will I pluck them up by the roots out of my land, which I have given them; and this house which I have sanctified for my name, will I cast out of my sight, and will make it to be a proverb and a by-word among all nations.

And this house, which is high, shall be an astonishment to every one that passeth by it; so that he shall say, Why hath the LORD done thus unto this land, and unto this house?

And it shall be answered, Because they forsook the LORD GOD of their fathers, which brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, and laid hold on other gods, and worshipped them and served them: therefore hath he brought all this evil upon them.

Then Solomon offered burnt-offerings unto the LORD on the altar of the LORD, which he had built before the porch;

Even after a certain rate every day, offering according to the commandment of Moses, on the sabbaths, and on the new moons, and on the solemn feasts, three times in the year, even in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles.

And he appointed, according to the order of David his father, the courses of the priests to their service, and the Levites to their charges, to praise and minister before the priests, as the duty of every day required: the porters also by their courses, at every gate: for so had David the man of God commanded.

And they departed not from the commandment of the king unto the priests and Levites, concerning any matter, or concerning the treasures.

ANNOTATIONS AND REFLECTIONS.

David conducted the ARK to JERUSALEM with every testimony of respect that it was in his power to shew; but the magnificence of the present solemnity far exceeded that of the former. David had himself provided for this, by appointing the number and offices of the attendants on the temple service. You have al-

ready

ready been informed that the whole tribe of LEVI was separated to the LORD.

When David assembled the princes, &c. a little before his death, the Levites amounted to 38,000. 24,000 were to forward the work of the *HOUSE of the LORD*; 6,000 were officers and judges; 4,000 were the guards of the *TEMPLE*; and 4,000 were to praise the LORD with musical instruments; and as more would be wanted after the Temple was built, instead of waiting till they were thirty years old, they were, for the future, to enter on their employments at twenty. David directed that the priests and Levites should be divided into twenty-four courses by lot; each course to give a weekly attendance at the Temple in their turns. The men who were skilful in singing, amounted at that time to 283: twelve of these were to stand with cymbals, and psalteries, and harps on common days, every morning and evening to praise the LORD, and to be joined by at least 166 of their brethren, who played upon various musical instruments.

On the great festivals all the singers attended, to sing and play successively, and at least 4,000 musicians. You find, that the whole body of priests and Levites were assembled at the dedication of the Temple.

What a grand and solemn service must this have been! especially with the addition of David's psalms, which were given to the chief musician, to be set to music and sung in order to commemorate the signal mercies of GOD to David and his people; and also to preserve the prophecies contained in them, which were inspired by the HOLY SPIRIT. Singing these divine hymns made a very agreeable part of publick worship,

and served at once to publish David's gratitude, and to excite the same sentiments in the minds of the people. Many of them are so particularly applicable to this occasion, that I think they will help your imagination, in forming an idea of the solemnity, reverence, and holy transports, which must have filled the hearts of those who assisted at it.

It is likely, that on taking up the Ark, they made use of the usual form of words.

Let God arise, and let his enemies be scattered; let them also that hate him, flee before him, &c.

When they approached the temple, we may suppose they * sang as follows:

O come, let us sing unto the LORD: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation.

Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms.

For the LORD is a great GOD, and a great king above all gods.

In his hand are the deep places of the earth: the strength of the hills is his also.

The sea is his, and he made it: and his hands formed the dry land.

O come let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our maker.

For he is our GOD, and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand: to-day if ye will hear his voice,

Harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness:

When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my work.

Forty years long was I grieved with this generation, and said, It is a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways.

Unto whom I swear in my wrath, that they should not enter into my rest.

When they reached the gates, it is likely the following * psalm was sung.

Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands.

Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing.

Know ye that the LORD he is God, it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise, be thankful unto him, and bless his name.

For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting: and his truth endureth to all generations.

As soon as they had deposited the Ark, we may imagine, that the whole choir of musicians brake forth into joyful strains like the † following:

O sing unto the LORD a new song: sing unto the LORD all the earth.

Sing unto the LORD, bless his name: shew forth his salvation from day to day.

* Psalm c.

† Psalms xcvi. and cxxxvi.

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Declare his glory among the heathen, his wonders among all people.

For the LORD is great, and greatly to be praised: he is to be feared above all gods.

For all the gods of the nations are idols: but the LORD made the heavens.

Honour and majesty are before him: strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.

Give unto the LORD, O ye kindreds of the people, give unto the LORD glory and strength.

Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come into his courts.

O worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness: fear before him all the earth.

Say among the heathen that the LORD reigneth: the world also shall be established that it shall not be moved; he shall judge the people righteously.

O give thanks unto the LORD, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.

O give thanks unto the GOD of gods: for his mercy endureth for ever.

O give thanks unto the GOD of heaven: for his mercy endureth for ever, &c.

At the conclusion of this pious thanksgiving, the LORD graciously shewed his acceptance of their services by a glorious CLOUD, like that which their fathers had been taught to acknowledge as a *manifestation* of his DIVINE PRESENCE. It certainly must have been a most awful, as well as affecting sight, to behold such a *visible token* of the favour of the GREAT CREATOR. Well might Solomon exclaim, *will God in every deed*

dwell

dwell with men upon earth! Behold the heaven, and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house which I have built!

The king had caused a place to be erected near the altar, raised above the people, that he might be heard and seen by all of them, whilst he was setting an example of paying adoration to the KING of Kings, and LORD of Lords.

The prayer which Solomon offered up on this occasion is so clear and comprehensive, that I think, my dear, there is no need of an explanation. It was perfectly consistent with that *true wisdom* which has *piety* for its foundation; and served to teach the people for what they should pray, and how they ought to address the SUPREME BEING; and from the humility with which he entreated the LORD to shew forth his GLORY in the house which he had built, they were instructed, that as no fabrick, however magnificent, was in reality fit for the habitation of the ALMIGHTY, they should receive the *manifestation of his glorious PRESENCE*, as an instance of infinite goodness and condescension.

Solomon's prayer is a most excellent pattern of public devotion; consisting of petitions for *national blessings*, *spiritual and temporal*; *forgiveness of sins*, and *deliverance* from the evil consequences of them: to which he added, *intercession* for those who were not yet converted to the true religion.

As a token that the sacrifices offered at this time were acceptable, it pleased the LORD to send *holy fire* (as at the dedication of the tabernacle) to consume them; on which the people fell prostrate to the earth, overcome with fear, love, and reverence for their bea-

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venly KING; acknowledging that there was no Being in the universe worthy to be compared to him: David had furnished them with words to express their pious raptures as follows * :

The LORD reigneth, let the earth rejoice: let the multitude of isles be glad thereof.

Clouds and darkness are round about him: righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne.

A fire goeth before him, and burneth up his enemies round about.

His lightnings enlightened the world: the earth saw and trembled.

The hills melted like wax at the presence of the LORD: at the presence of the LORD of the whole earth.

The heavens declare his righteousness: and all the people see his glory.

Confounded be all they that serve graven images, that boast themselves of idols: worship him all ye gods.

Zion heard, and was glad, and the daughters of Judah rejoiced; because of thy judgments, O LORD.

For thou, LORD, art high above all the earth: thou art exalted far above all gods.

Ye that love the LORD, hate evil: he preserveth the souls of his saints, he delivereth them out of the hand of the wicked.

Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart.

Rejoice in the LORD, ye righteous: and give thanks of the remembrance of his holiness.

* Psalms xcvi, xcvi, and xlvii,

THANKSGIVING PSALMS. 373

*Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all the earth :
make a loud noise, and rejoice, and sing praise.*

*Sing unto the LORD with the harp ; with the harp and
the voice of a psalm.*

*With trumpets and sound of cornet make a joyful noise
before the LORD, the king.*

*O clap your hands, all ye people, shout unto GOD with
the voice of triumph :*

*For the LORD most high is terrible ; he is a great king
over all the earth.*

*He shall subdue the people under us, and the nations un-
der our feet.*

*He shall choose our inheritance for us, the excellency
of Jacob whom he loved.*

*GOD is gone up with a shout, the LORD with the
sound of a trumpet.*

*Sing praises to GOD, sing praises : sing praises unto
our king, sing praises.*

*For GOD is the king of all the earth, sing ye praises
with understanding.*

*The whole solemnity might properly end with the
same blessing which David pronounced on the people.*

*GOD * be merciful unto us, and bless us : and cause his
face to shine upon us.*

*That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving
health among all nations.*

*Let the people praise thee, O GOD ; let all the people
praise thee.*

*O let the nations be glad and sing for joy : for thou shalt
judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth.*

* Psalm lxviii.

Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee.

Thin shall the earth yield her increase; and God, even our own God shall bless us.

GOD shall bless us, and all the ends of the earth shall fear him.

Though our mode of worship differs greatly from that of the Israelites, we christians may notwithstanding, collect a great deal of valuable instruction from the account of the dedication of Solomon's Temple.

The sentiments which Solomon entertained of the majesty and goodness of God, are such, as every one should endeavour to possess whilst they are engaged in publick worship. He is likewise worthy of imitation in his benevolent solicitude for the welfare of God's people, and the propagation of religion. In respect to burnt-sacrifices, we have no occasion to follow his example; neither is it with us a point of duty to build *stately* edifices to his honour.

As the LORD vouchsafed to make his PRESENCE evident in the land of Israel, it was proper that a Temple should be erected in the *place which he had chosen, to fix his name there*, in order to keep up a perpetual remembrance of his *relation to this people as their KING*, and likewise to shew forth his GLORY and MAJESTY to the surrounding nations; who hearing that the *living God* had actually manifested himself in a *visible manner at Jerusalem*, might forsake idols, and embrace his holy religion.

You must not suppose, that it was possible to add to the GLORY of God by any human means. He is infinitely

initely perfect and happy in himself, and the fountain of all happiness in the whole universe: all the service we can pay him therefore is, to *proclaim* his power, wisdom, goodness, mercy, justice, truth, as a means to keep up our own fear, love, and veneration towards him, and that others may be invited by our example to do the same; and this service may be performed in an *humble* edifice. We must not expect, be the building ever so costly, that God will *appear* amongst *us* as he did in *Israel*, because we live under a very different dispensation, and have the promise of those good things, of which the splendour and magnificence of Solomon's Temple were but very imperfect emblems: it is however no sin to erect fine churches, and adorn them properly; on the contrary, in opulent cities, where the very merchants dwell in palaces, those buildings which are dedicated to divine service, should be proportionably magnificent provided that the worship performed in them is agreeable to the rules prescribed by their religion.

S E C T. XLIX.

THE BUILDING OF SOLOMON'S HOUSE—THE
HOUSE OF LEBANON—THE HOUSE FOR PHA-
RAOH'S DAUGHTER—HIS THRONE, &c.

SOLOMON was building his house thir-
teen years. He built also the house of
the forest of Lebanon.

And Solomon made affinity with Pharaoh
king of Egypt, and took Pharaoh's daughter
and brought her into the city of David, un-
til he had made an end of building his own
house, and the house of the LORD, and the
wall of Jerusalem round about.

Then he made a porch for the throne,
where he might judge, even the porch of
judgment: and it was covered with cedar
from one side of the floor to the other.

And his house where he dwelt, had ano-
ther court within the porch, which was of
the like work. Solomon made also an house
for Pharaoh's daughter, (which he had taken
to wife) like unto this porch.

All these were of costly stones, according to the measures of hewed stones, sawed with saws, within and without, even from the foundation unto the coping, and so on the outside toward the great court.

Moreover the king made a great throne of ivory, and overlaid it with the best gold.

The throne had six steps, and the top of the throne was round behind: and there were stays on either side on the place of the seat, and two lions stood beside the stays.

And twelve lions stood there on the one side and on the other upon the six steps: there was not the like made in any kingdom.

And king Solomon made two hundred targets of beaten gold: six hundred shekels of gold went to one target.

And he made three hundred shields of beaten gold; three pound of gold went to one shield: and the king put them in the house of the forest of Lebanon.

And all king Solomon's drinking vessels were of gold, and all the vessels of the house of the forest of Lebanon were of pure gold, none were of silver; it was nothing accounted of in the days of Solomon.

Now

Now the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year, was six hundred threescore and six talents of gold.

For the king had at sea a navy of Tharshish, with the navy of Hiram : once in three years came the navy of Tharshish, bringing gold and silver, ivory, and apes, and peacocks.

Then went Solomon to Ezion-geber, and to Eloth, at the sea-side in the land of Edom.

And it came to pass at the end of twenty years, when Solomon had built the two houses, the house of the LORD, and the king's house.

(Now Hiram the king of Tyre had furnished Solomon with cedar-trees, and fir-trees, and with gold, according to all his desire) that then king Solomon gave Hiram twenty cities in the land of Galilee.

And Hiram came out from Tyre to see the cities which Solomon had given him, and they pleased him not.

And he said, What cities are these which thou hast given me, my brother? And he called them the land of Cabul unto this day.

And Hiram sent to the king six-score talents of gold.

And

And this is the reason of the levy which king Solomon raised, for to build the house of the LORD, and his own house, and Millo, and the wall of Jerusalem, and Hazor, and Megiddo, and Gezer.

For Pharaoh king of Egypt had gone up, and taken Gezer, and burnt it with fire, and slain the Canaanites that dwelt in the city, and given it for a present unto his daughter, Solomon's wife.

And Solomon built Gezer, and Bethoron the nether.

And Baalath, and Tadmor in the wilderness, in the land.

And the cities which Hiram had restored to Solomon, Solomon built them, and caused the children of Israel to dwell there.

He built also store-cities, and chariot-cities, and cities of the horsemen. And Solomon had horses brought out of Egypt.

And Solomon brought up the daughter of Pharaoh out of the city of David unto the house that he had built for her: for he said, My wife shall not dwell in the house of David king of Israel, because the places are holy, whereunto the ark of the LORD hath come.

ANNOTATIONS AND REFLECTIONS.

When king Solomon had built the Temple of the LORD, he caused a stately palace to be erected for his own residence, to adorn the land of Israel, and procure him that respect which was due from all the nations of the earth, to the king of God's appointment. You find that this building was much longer in hand than the *House of the LORD*, which shews, that Solomon preferred the honour of God to his own grandeur.

The house of the forest of Lebanon, is supposed to have been built as a pleasant retreat from the fatigues of state affairs.

It is astonishing to reflect on the riches of Solomon; but you find the sacred historian accounts for his possessing such stores of wealth, by acquainting us with his numerous resources.

I have already informed you, how David gained the ports of Elath and Ezion-geber. The * trade carried on from these places, was the same which is now in the hands of our East-India merchants. It is not exactly described where Ophir and Tharshish were situated; neither is it important to us: it is well known, that the eastern territories abound with treasures even in these days, and it is likely that they were much more plentiful formerly.

Solomon finding the traffick so profitable, went to Elath and Ezion-geber, in order to direct the increase of his navy, and to furnish those ports with inhabitants well skilled in this kind of merchandize; these he se-

* Prideaux's Connection.

lected from the Tyrians Hiram had supplied him with for hewing timber, &c. for the Temple. From the cordiality which afterwards subsisted between Hiram and Solomon, we may conclude, that the cities which the latter offered to his friend, were by no means insignificant; for Solomon had too enlarged a mind, to think of making him trifling presents: but these cities, which were in the outskirts of Israel, and had been, till Solomon took possession of them, in the hands of the natives, were most likely encompassed with corn-fields, and pastures, and therefore not acceptable to a Tyrian prince, whose subjects were unskilled in the culture of the earth, and had learnt to undervalue the choicest gifts of nature, and to prefer luxury and pomp to the more substantial advantages of rural simplicity.

Another branch of commerce which Solomon carried on, was with Egypt; it seems as if, on account of his alliance with Pharaoh's daughter, he was supplied from thence with chariots &c. at a cheaper rate than the neighbouring nations; for Solomon sold them again to advantage. How he came to reserve such a number for himself, I cannot certainly account for; but it appears probable, that God's command, which forbade kings to *multiply horses to themselves*, was limited to times of war; and as Solomon had a promise of peace during his whole reign, he was at liberty, if he refrained from *putting his trust in them*, to indulge in every article of magnificence, that the neighbouring princes regarded as marks of royalty; and had a right to *surpass* them in every temporal possession, because his grandeur served at *that period* to *display* the superiority of the LORD JEHOVAH, who they must perceive

382 SOLOMON'S DAUGHTER.

was able to bestow wealth and wisdom without measure.

I cannot well understand, at what time Solomon married Pharaoh's daughter; but will venture to suppose, that it was after he had built the Temple: for it is reasonable to imagine, that his whole attention was engaged by that important business, and that the fame of his wisdom made this princess ambitious of an alliance with him, and induced her to become *professedly* a proselyte to the true religion, otherwise it would have been *unlawful* for him to have married her; nor would he have brought an *heathen* into the HOLY CITY, at a time when piety and devotion had entire possession of his heart: it appears as if she soon began to discover some inclination for idolatry, by his thinking it improper for her to dwell any longer in a place peculiarly sanctified by the LORD.

Solomon completed the pious business he had so willingly undertaken, and so cheerfully pursued, by establishing publick worship agreeably to the original institution of his fathers; and had reason to say, "*that the merchandize of wisdom, was better than the merchandize of silver: and the gain thereof, than fine gold.*" for he had not only a greater portion of worldly advantages, than any man was ever able to acquire by his own industry; but must necessarily have had a fund of *mental delights*, infinitely superior to all the enjoyments that wealth can purchase.

S E C T. L.

THE QUEEN OF SHEBA VISITS KING
SOLOMON.

AND when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon, concerning the name of the LORD, she came to prove him with hard questions.

And she came to Jerusalem with a very great train, with camels that bare spices, and very much gold, and precious stones: and when she was come to Solomon, she communed with him of all that was in her heart.

And Solomon told her all her questions: there was not any thing hid from the king, which he told her not.

And when the queen of Sheba had seen all Solomon's wisdom, and the house that he had built,

And the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers and their apparel, and his cupbearers, and his ascent by which he went

up unto the house of the LORD : there was no more spirit in her.

And she said to the king, It was a true report that I heard in mine own land, of thy acts, and of thy wisdom.

Howbeit, I believed not the words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen it: and behold, the half was not told me: thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard.

Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom.

Blessed be the LORD thy GOD which doth lighten thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel; because the LORD loved Israel forever, therefore made he thee king to do judgment and justice.

And she gave the king an hundred and twenty talents of gold, and of spices very great store, and precious stones: there came no more such abundance of spices, as these which the queen of Sheba gave to king Solomon.

And king Solomon gave unto the queen of Sheba, all her desire whatsoever she asked besides that which Solomon gave her of his

royal bounty : so she turned and went to her own country, she and her servants.

And all the earth sought to Solomon, to hear his wisdom which God had put in his heart.

And all the kings of Arabia, and governors of the country brought gold and silver.

And all the kings of the earth sought the presence of Solomon, to hear his wisdom, at God had put in his heart.

And Solomon had four thousand stalls for horses and chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen; whom he bestowed in the chariot-ries, and with the king at Jerusalem.

And he reigned over all the kings, from the river even unto the land of the Philistines, and to the border of Egypt.

And all the earth sought to Solomon, to hear the wisdom which God had put in his heart.

ANNOTATIONS AND REFLECTIONS.

The queen of Sheba, who visited Solomon, is supposed to have been sovereign of some part of Arabia, originally descended from Keturah, Abraham's second wife; so that it is very likely, the knowledge of the true God had been transmitted to her by her pi-

ous ancestors; though his holy worship was in her kingdom, as in other countries, mixed and corrupted by the introduction of idolatry.

It appears, by her taking such a long journey to hear the wisdom of Solomon, that this Princess was desirous of being thoroughly acquainted with the DIVINE WILL; for she did not go to Jerusalem merely to see the glory of Solomon, and vie with him in splendor; but to prove, whether he were in reality possessed of such extraordinary endowments as fame reported; and whether it was certainly true, that God had manifested himself in Israel. The inhabitants of the east country were remarkable for their wit and ingenuity; but Solomon was reputed to excel them all. It was customary for the learned to amuse themselves with difficult questions, which required a knowledge of profound sciences to propose and to explain; in compliance with this custom, the queen of Sheba had furnished herself with problems of this kind from wise men in her kingdom, that she might, by the answers she carried back, confirm the truth of the extraordinary reports they had heard of Solomon's superior understanding. You find that she received ample satisfaction in every particular, and returned to her own country full of admiration of Solomon's glory, and reverence for that ALMIGHTY BEING, who alone could exalt the human mind so near to perfection; and bestow with unbounded liberality, those treasures, which mankind in general strive to accumulate with incessant toil, and enjoy not without the interruption of many anxious cares.

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The surrounding nations preferred worldly pomp and grandeur to every intellectual blessing; and being possessed of a large share of the treasures of the earth, they were enabled to appear with great outward splendor; on which account, they would have despised the LORD's chosen people, if they had been inferior to themselves in this particular. It pleased God therefore, to raise the kingdom of Israel in a most wonderful manner, by degrees, from a state of abject slavery, to the highest pitch of magnificence; and to occasion all other nations to pay tribute and homage to the king of *his appointment*; by which means, the DIVINE BEING proved himself to be, beyond dispute, KING of Kings, and LORD of Lords.

The sacred historian refers us to the books of Nathan the prophet and others, for the records of the last acts of Solomon's reign; but these writings are lost to the world, and therefore we can come to no certainty in respect to the events of many years; we may however infer, from the Book of Ecclesiastes, written by Solomon himself, that he soon became elated with prosperity, and grew unmindful from whence it was derived, and for what purpose it was bestowed. He found himself at the very summit of greatness, and thinking that he had judgment sufficient to guide himself, threw off his confidence in God, and began to form schemes for *perpetuating* his enjoyments; with this view, he employed his mind in vain researches after *permanent happiness*, independent of the SUPREME BEING; but when he no longer employed his *wisdom* in the service of God, and the good of mankind, it was only productive of fatigue and disappointment.

He then *despised* WISDOM, and resolving to try what PLEASURE would produce, gave himself up to mirth and festivity, thinking to drive away reflection, by a constant round of dissipation; but these pursuits ended also in discontent; and he soon said *of laughter it is mad, and of mirth what doeth it?*

Solomon supposed that the means of happiness were still in his power; and recollecting (it is likely) the delight he had formerly experienced in inspecting the progress of arts, resolved to employ his wealth in *building and planting*; he therefore spared no expence, but even taxed his subjects to adorn his kingdom with magnificent edifices, and beautiful gardens, but again missed his aim. When these works were compleated, he endeavoured to procure content by increasing his RICHES: this was also *vanity and vexation of Spirit*; for the thoughts that he must die, and leave all his possessions behind him to a son very unfit to rule, embittered his hours, and abated the relish of every enjoyment.

The idolatrous nations were the professed votaries of sensuality; he therefore formed connections with them, by marrying wives from amongst them, in hopes (we may suppose) of learning refinements of luxury unknown in Israel: in this scheme he was too successful; but it was attended with unhappy consequences, instead of procuring satisfaction, as you will read in the ensuing section.

S E C T. LI.

SOLOMON'S APOSTASY—His DEATH.

BUT king Solomon loved many strange women, (together with the daughter of Pharaoh) women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians and Hittites:

Of the nations concerning which the LORD said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in unto you, for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods: Solomon clave unto these in love.

And it came to pass when Solomon was old his wives turned away his heart.

Then did Solomon build an high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the hill that is before Jerusalem; and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon.

And likewise did he for all his strange wives, which burnt incense, and sacrificed unto their gods.

And the LORD was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the LORD God of Israel which had appeared unto him twice,

And had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods : but he kept not that which the LORD commanded.

Wherefore the LORD said unto Solomon, Forasmuch as this is done of thee, and thou hast not kept my covenant and my statutes which I have commanded thee, I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant.

Notwithstanding in thy days I will not do it, for David thy father's sake : but I will rend it out of the hand of thy son.

Howbeit, I will not rend away all the kingdom : but I will give one tribe to thy son, for David my servant's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake which I have chosen.

And the LORD stirred up an adversary unto Solomon, Hadad the Edomite ; he was of the king's seed in Edom.

And God stirred him up another adversary, Rezon, the son of Eliadah, which fled from his lord Hadadezer king of Zobah.

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And he was an adversary to Israel all the days of Solomon, beside the mischief that Hadad did, and he abhorred Israel, and reigned over Syria.

And Jeroboam the son of Nebat, an Ephrathite of Zereda, Solomon's servant, (whose mother's name was Zeruah, a widow woman) even he lift up his hand against the king.

And this was the cause that he lift up his hand against the king: Solomon built Millo, and repaired the breaches of the city of David his father.

And the man Jeroboam was a mighty man of valour: and Solomon seeing the young man that he was industrious, he made him ruler over all the charge of the house of Joseph.

And it came to pass at that time when Jeroboam went out of Jerusalem, that the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite found him in the way: and he had clad himself with a new garment; and they two were alone in the field.

And Ahijah caught the new garment that was on him, and rent it in twelve pieces.

And he said to Jeroboam, Take thee ten pieces : for thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, Behold, I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to thee :

(But he shall have one tribe for my servant David's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake, the city which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel)

Because that they have forsaken me, and have worshipped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and Milcom the god of the children of Ammon, and have not walked in my ways, to do that which is right in mine eyes, and to keep my statutes and my judgments, as did David his father.

Howbeit, I will not take the whole kingdom out of his hand : but I will make him prince all the days of his life, for David my servant's sake, whom I chose, because he kept my commandments and my statutes :

But I will take the kingdom out of his son's hand, and will give it unto thee, even ten tribes.

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And I will take thee, and thou shalt reign according to all that thy soul desireth, and shalt be king over Israel.

And it shall be, if thou wilt hearken unto all that I command thee, and wilt walk in my ways, and do that is right in my sight, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as David my servant did; that I will be with thee, and build thee a sure house; as I built for David, and will give Israel unto thee.

And I will for this afflict the seed of David, but not for ever.

Solomon fought therefore to kill Jeroboam: and Jeroboam arose, and fled into Egypt, unto Shishak king of Egypt, and was in Egypt until the death of Solomon.

And the time that Solomon reigned in Jerusalem, over all Israel, was forty years.

ANNOTATIONS AND REFLECTIONS.

If we had not been able to collect from Solomon's own writings the *cause* of his apostasy, we should be at a loss to account for it; but when we read that he turned his back upon *religion*, and depended *merely* on *human reason*, our wonder ceases, for he became like a

ship without a pilot in a dangerous ocean, full of rocks and quicksands.

I need not, my dear, make use of arguments to convince you of God's *just* dealings with this ungrateful prince; it will be sufficient to look back to the *promises* repeatedly made to him and his father: they were all *conditional*, so that Solomon was sufficiently warned that the kingdom would not be *continued* to his *posterity*, if he *departed from his duty*.

It was impossible that Solomon could be ignorant of the *sinfulness* of erecting Temples to *idols*, in that very land especially, wherein he had been employed to build one to the name of the LORD JEHOVAH; and as his reputation for *wisdom* was universally known, his example was very contagious, because every one might think himself justified in his imitation of the *wise* KING SOLOMON.

The unhappy effects of his permitting *idolatry* and *luxury* to be introduced, were soon felt by his people: domestick joys, which had till this period, made *every one happy under his vine and under his fig-tree*, were exchanged for *riot and dissipation*; and consequently the education of youth must have been neglected, and the service of God esteemed a burden: the prosperity of Israel declined, and foreign powers were encouraged to attack them.

I scarcely need repeat to you, my dear, that Hadad was that young prince who fled from Edom into Egypt, from Joab's victorious arms; he had found favour in the sight of the king, and was married to his wife's sister. Rezon, with whom Hadad entered into a league against Solomon, was the man who deserted
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from Hadadezar king of Zobah, and was made king of Damascus; but David dispossessed him; however he had lately recovered it.

The necessity of defending the kingdom against these adversaries, and the various services the Israelites were obliged to render to the king on account of his numerous alliances, made the latter end of his reign grievous to them, and his glory was tarnished in the eyes of all the world.

Whilst Solomon continued *religious*, he undoubtedly was a *happy* monarch; there was neither discontent nor faction under his government; he knew not the sorrow of losing thousands of his subjects by war, nor had he cause to fear, whilst he was under the peculiar direction of God, that any of his plans for the good of the nation would fail of success.

Solomon's life, in all probability, was shortened by his excesses, for he was no more than 58 years old when he died; there is great reason to suppose, that he had a proper sense of his crimes: but it was too late for him to bring about a reformation in his kingdom; for the affection of his people was alienated from him, and his wives which he had increased to the number of one thousand, had gained such an ascendancy, that no efforts of his own would have prevailed against their different parties; and neither he or his subjects could hope, that the Lord, whose honour was so greatly affronted by them, would work a miracle to change their minds. They slighted God, and preferred idols; therefore, were justly left to the consequences they had been repeatedly warned to expect.

From Solomon's history we may learn, my dear, that WISDOM, POWER, and RICHES, are *blessings* only to those who use them properly; when received with thankfulness, enjoyed with moderation, and employed in relieving the distresses of the indigent, or encouraging honest industry, they are productive of great satisfaction; but when they are made subservient to vice, they render their possessors despicable and unhappy.

Whatsoever * SOLOMON'S eyes desired, he kept not from them; neither withheld he his heart from any joy: but experience taught him, that there was no profit in any worldly enjoyment; and his search after HAPPINESS, concluded with a thorough conviction, that it was only to be obtained by fearing GOD, and keeping his commandments.

* Ecclesiastes.

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S E C T. LII.

THE ISRAELITES ASSEMBLE TO CROWN REHOBAM—TEN TRIBES REVOLT AND MAKE JEROBOAM KING OVER ISRAEL.

AND Rehoboam went to Shechem: for all Israel were come to Shechem to make him king.

And it came to pass when Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who was yet in Egypt, heard of it, (for he was fled from the presence of king Solomon, and Jeroboam dwelt in Egypt)

That they sent and called him: and Jeroboam and all the congregation of Israel came, and spake unto Rehoboam, saying,

Thy father made our yoke grievous: now therefore make thou the grievous service of thy father, and his heavy yoke which he put upon us, lighter, and we will serve thee.

And he said unto them, Depart yet for three days, then come again to me. And the people departed.

And king Rehoboam consulted with the old men that stood before Solomon his father,

ther, while he yet lived, and said, How do you advise, that I may answer this people?

And they spake unto him, saying, If thou wilt be a servant unto this people this day, and wilt serve them and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be thy servants for ever.

But he forsook the counsel of the old men, which they had given him, and consulted with the young men that were grown up with him, and which stood up before him:

And he said unto them, What counsel give ye, that we may answer this people, who have spoken to me, saying, Make the yoke which thy father did put upon us, lighter?

And the young men that were grown up with him, spake unto him, saying, Thus shalt thou speak unto this people that spake unto thee, saying, Thy father made our yoke heavy, but make thou it lighter unto us; thus shalt thou say unto them, My little finger shall be thicker than my father's loins.

And now whereas my father did lade you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke: my father hath chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions.

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So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam the third day, as the king had appointed, saying, Come to me again the third day.

And the king answered the people roughly, and forsook the old men's counsel that they gave him ;

And spake to them after the counsel of the young men, saying, My father made your yoke heavy, and I will add to your yoke ; my father also chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions.

Wherefore the king hearkened not unto the people ; for the cause was from the LORD, that he might perform his saying, which the LORD spake by Abijah the Shilonite unto Jeroboam the son of Nebat.

So when all Israel saw that the king hearkened not unto them, the people answered the king, saying, What portion have we in David ? neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse : to your tents, O Israel : now see to thine own house, David. So Israel departed unto their tents.

But as for the children of Israel which dwelt in the cities of Judah, Rehoboam reigned over them.

Then

Then king Rehoboam sent Adoram, who was over the tribute; and all Israel stoned him with stones, that he died: therefore king Rehoboam made speed to get him up to his chariot, to flee to Jerusalem.

So Israel rebelled against the house of David unto this day.

And it came to pass when all Israel heard that Jeroboam was come again, that they sent and called him unto the congregation, and made him king over all Israel: there was none that followed the house of David, but the tribe of Judah only.

And when Rehoboam was come to Jerusalem, he assembled all the house of Judah, with the tribe of Benjamin, an hundred and fourscore thousand chosen men, which were warriors, to fight against the house of Israel, to bring the kingdom again to Rehoboam the son of Solomon.

But the word of God came unto Shemaiah the man of God, saying;

Speak unto Rehoboam the son of Solomon king of Judah, and unto all the house of Judah and Benjamin, and to the remnant of the people, saying,

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Thus saith the LORD, Ye shall not go up, nor fight against your brethren the children of Israel: return every man to his house, for this thing is from me. They hearkened therefore to the word of the LORD, and returned to depart, according to the word of the LORD.

And Rehoboam dwelt in Jerusalem, and built cities for defence in Judah.

And he fortified the strong holds, and put captains in them, and store of victuals, and of oil and wine.

And in every several city he put shields and spears, and made them exceeding strong, having Judah and Benjamin on his side.

And the priests and the Levites, that were in all Israel, resorted to him out of all their coasts.

So they strengthened the kingdom of Judah, and made Rehoboam the son of Solomon strong, three years: for three years they walked in the way of David and Solomon.

And Rehoboam made Abijah the son of Maachah the chief, to be ruler among his brethren: for he thought to make him king.

And he dealt wisely, and dispersed of all his children throughout all the countries of
Judah

Judah and Benjamin, unto every fenced city: and he gave them victual in abundance. And he desired many wives.

And it came to pass when Rehoboam had established the kingdom, and had strengthened himself, he forsook the law of the LORD, and all Israel with him.

And it came to pass that in the fifth year of king Rehoboam, Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem, (because they had transgressed against the LORD)

With twelve hundred chariots, and three-score thousand horsemen: and the people were without number that came with him out of Egypt, the Lubims, the Sukkiims, and the Ethiopians.

And he took the fenced cities which pertained to Judah, and came to Jerusalem.

Then came Shemaiah the prophet to Rehoboam, and to the princes of Judah that were gathered together to Jerusalem because of Shishak, and said unto them, Thus saith the LORD, Ye have forsaken me, and therefore, have I also left you in the hand of Shishak.

Whereupon the princes of Israel and the king humbled themselves: and they said, The LORD is righteous.

And

And when the LORD saw that they humbled themselves, the word of the LORD came to Shemaiah, saying, They have humbled themselves: therefore I will not destroy them, but I will grant them some deliverance: and my wrath shall not be poured out upon Jerusalem by the hand of Shishak.

Nevertheless, they shall be his servants: that they may know my service, and the service of the kingdoms of the countries.

So Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem, and took away the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king's house; he took all: he carried away also the shields of gold which Solomon had made.

Instead of which king Rehoboam made shields of brass, and committed them to the hands of the chief of the guard, that kept the entrance of the king's house.

And when the king entered into the house of the LORD, the guard came and fet them, and brought them again into the guard-chamber.

And when he humbled himself, the wrath of the LORD turned from him, that he would

not

not destroy him altogether; and also in Judah things went well.

So king Rehoboam strengthened himself in Jerusalem, and reigned. For Rehoboam was one and forty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city which the LORD had chosen out of all the tribes of Israel to put his name there. And his mother's name was Naamah an Ammonitess.

And he did evil, because he prepared not his heart to seek the LORD.

And there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all their days.

And Rehoboam slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David. And Abijah his son reigned in his stead.

ANNOTATIONS AND REFLECTIONS.

The men whom Rehoboam consulted, were persons who had been educated with him, and quite unskilled in state affairs; Rehoboam seems to have been a very imprudent prince, or he would not have preferred the advice of such ignorant persons, to the counsel of those, whom age and experience had taught wisdom; besides, if he had taken a little time for reflection, his own reason would have suggested, that such kind of threatenings as he made use of, were more likely to aggravate than

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than to appease the discontent of the people. Of what nature the grievances they complained of were, we cannot exactly tell; but it is likely, that Solomon had demanded contributions of them, towards his unbounded expences, which they murmured to pay.

Rehoboam did not endeavour to procure the favour of the LORD; instead of that, he left JERUSALEM, where the TEMPLE was, and repaired to *Shechem*; this shews, that he was not a religious prince. The people, it is likely, sent for Jeroboam from Egypt, to intimidate Rehoboam. When his subjects revolted, the king employed a very unpromising method to conciliate them; for Adoram was *collector of the tribute*, and therefore the most obnoxious person he could send; as it appeared that he came to demand, what they had already refused to pay; so that it was natural to expect he would fall a victim to their rage.

In mercy to the house of David, and in remembrance of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the LORD did not utterly *forsake* his people, but from this time frequently made known his will by means of his PROPHETS; and on the present occasion, graciously sent Shemaiah to prevent any farther contests between the tribes, as it would be in vain for *Judab* to strive against the DIVINE WILL; neither would God permit *Israel* to cut off the *branch of DAVID*.

You must not suppose, my dear, that JEROBOAM'S ambition, or REHOBAM'S imprudence, were from the LORD; the original cause of this unhappy revolution was, the *introduction of IDOLATRY into the land*. Whilst the king of Israel was careful of preserving the worship

worship of GOD *pure* and *undefiled*, he was considered as the LORD's *vicegerent*; and according to the *covenant* which the LORD had graciously made, had a *right* in all *important affairs*, to expect *direction* from him by which he was *bound* to act. The SUPREME BEING certainly knoweth before hand what every person *will* do, but does not *incline* any one to *evil*; on the contrary, has taught men the consequences of *good* and *evil*; if they are deserving of *mercy*, his PROVIDENCE interposes for their *happiness*; but if, on the contrary, they are *impious* and *oppressive*, and reject the warning he has caused to be given, he *leaves* them at last to fall into *destruction*. The son of Solomon was disgraced, not only for his father's apostasy, but for neglecting to destroy the idols, and to solicit for himself the favour of GOD: and Jeroboam's ambition was suffered to succeed, as the other tribes were unworthy of a better king.

Temporal rewards and punishments are not so equally dispensed as formerly, either towards kingdoms or particular individuals, for we are now taught to look for retribution in a future state; but the kingdom of Israel had peculiar promises that no wickedness should succeed against them, whilst they continued to shew forth the glory of GOD; and they had also threatnings of severe punishments if they brought dishonour upon his HOLY NAME, by putting idols in competition with him.

Instead of removing the abominations, which provoked the LORD to withdraw his *glorious* PRESENCE from this once happy land, Rehoboam was only intent on strengthening his kingdom by *human means*, and

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both he and his people increased in wickedness; but the LORD was still mindful of his covenant with David, and for *his sake* prevented the ruin which threatened Judah, by restraining Shishak from destroying them; and that they might know that it was the power of the LORD that delivered them, the prophet was sent *beforehand* to bring them to repentance; happily for Judah, they listened to his remonstrances. Shishak was however permitted to take the golden shields, which had been the pride of Solomon and Rehobam; and also to despoil the Temple, which had already lost its *greatest* GLORY.

Rehobam seems to have been affected with this deliverance, and to have frequented the Temple afterwards; but still his service was deficient, for he *prepared not his heart to do the will of the LORD*.

As you lately read that Solomon was married to Pharaoh's daughter, it must appear strange to you, that Shishak king of Egypt, should come against his son; I must therefore inform you, that in the year Solomon built his Temple, there happened a revolution in Egypt, when that race of kings, from whom Solomon's father-in-law descended, were dispossessed of the throne, and were succeeded by another, of whom Shishak was the first monarch.

I may now leave you, my dear, to make your own reflections on Rehobam's folly and wickedness; and I am sure you must perceive, that both he and his people were very undeserving of the divine favour.

S E C T. LIII.

THE REIGN OF JEROBOAM KING OF ISRAEL.

THEN Jeroboam built Shechem in mount Ephraim, and dwelt therein, and went out from thence, and built Penue.

And Jeroboam said in his heart, Now shall the kingdom return to the house of David:

If this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, even to Rehoboam king of Judah, and they shall kill me, and go again to Rehoboam king of Judah.

Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.

And he set the one in Beth-el, and the other put he in Dan.

And this thing became a sin: for the people went to worship before the one, even unto Dan.

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JEROBOAM'S PRESUMPTION. 409

And he made an house of high places, and made priests of the lowest of the people, which were not of the sons of Levi.

And Jeroboam ordained a feast in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, like unto the feast that is in Judah, and he offered upon the altar, (so did he in Beth-el) sacrificing unto the calves that he had made: and he placed in Beth-el the priests of the high places which he had made.

So he offered upon the altar which he had made in Beth-el, the fifteenth day of the eighth month, even in the month which he had devised of his own heart: and ordained a feast unto the children of Israel, and he offered upon the altar, and burnt incense.

And behold there came a man of God out of Judah, by the word of the LORD unto Beth-el: and Jeroboam stood by the altar to burn incense.

And he cried against the altar in the word of the LORD, and said, O altar, altar, thus saith the LORD, Behold, a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name, and upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places that burn incense upon thee, and men's bones shall be burnt upon thee.

And he gave a sign the same day saying, This is the sign which the LORD hath spoken; Behold, the altar shall be rent, and the ashes that are upon it shall be poured out.

And it came to pass when king Jeroboam heard the saying of the man of God, which had cried against the altar in Beth-el, that he put forth his hand from the altar, saying, Lay hold on him. And his hand which he put forth against him, dried up, so that he could not pull it in again to him.

The altar also was rent, and the ashes poured out from the altar, according to the sign which the man of God had given by the word of the LORD.

And the king answered and said unto the man of God, Intreat now the face of the LORD thy God, and pray for me, that my hand may be restored me again. And the man of God besought the LORD, and the king's hand was restored him again, and became as it was before.

And the king said unto the man of God, Come home with me and refresh thyself, and I will give thee a reward.

And

And the man of God said unto the king, If thou wilt give me half thine house, I will not go in with thee, neither will I eat bread, nor drink water in this place.

For so was it charged me by the word of the LORD, saying, Eat no bread, nor drink water, nor turn again by the same way that thou camest.

So he went another way, and returned not by the way that he came to Beth-el.

After this thing, Jeroboam returned not from his evil way, but made again of the lowest of the people, priests of the high places: whosoever would, he consecrated him, and he became one of the priests of the high places.

And this thing became sin unto the house of Jeroboam, even to cut it off, and to destroy it from off the face of the earth.

At that time Abijah the son of Jeroboam fell sick.

And Jeroboam said to his wife, Arise, I pray thee, and disguise thyself, that thou be not known to be the wife of Jeroboam: and get thee to Shiloh; behold, there is Ahijah the prophet, which told me that I should be king over this people.

And take with thee ten loaves, and crack-nels, and a cruse of honey, and go to him: he shall tell thee what shall become of the child.

And Jeroboam's wife did so, and arose and went to Shiloh, and came to the house of Ahijah: but Ahijah could not see, for his eyes were set by reason of his age.

And the LORD said unto Ahijah, Behold, the wife of Jeroboam cometh to ask a thing of thee for her son, for he is sick: thus and thus shalt thou say unto her: for it shall be when she cometh in, that she shall feign herself to be another woman.

And it was so, when Ahijah heard the sound of her feet, as she came in at the door, that he said, Come in, thou wife of Jeroboam, why feignest thou thyself to be another? for I am sent to thee with heavy tidings.

Go, tell Jeroboam, Thus saith the LORD GOD of Israel, Forasmuch as I exalted thee from among the people, and made thee prince over my people Israel.

And rent the kingdom away from the house of David, and gave it thee; and yet thou hast not been as my servant David, who kept my commandments, and who fol-

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lowed me with all his heart, to do that only which was right in mine eyes,

But hast done evil above all that were before thee: for thou hast gone and made thee other gods, and molten images, to provoke me to anger, and hast cast me behind thy back:

Therefore behold, I will bring evil upon the house of Jeroboam, and will cut off from Jeroboam every man, and him that is shut up and left in Israel, and will take away the remnant of the house of Jeroboam, as a man taketh away dung, till it be all gone.

Him that dieth of Jeroboam in the city, shall the dogs eat: and him that dieth in the field, shall the fowls of the air eat: for the LORD hath spoken it.

Arise thou, therefore, get thee to thine own house: and when thy feet enter into the city, the child shall die.

And all Israel shall mourn for him, and bury him: for he only of Jeroboam shall come to the grave, because in him there is found some good thing toward the LORD God of Israel, in the house of Jeroboam.

Moreover, the LORD shall raise him up a king over Israel, who shall cut off the house of Jeroboam that day:

For the LORD shall smite Israel, as a reed is shaken in the water, and he shall root up Israel out of this good land, which he gave to their fathers, and shall scatter them beyond the river, because they have made their groves, provoking the LORD to anger.

And he shall give Israel up, because of the sin of Jeroboam, who did sin, and who made Israel to sin.

And Jeroboam's wife arose, and departed, and came to Tirzah: and when she came to the threshold of the door, the child died.

And they buried him, and all Israel mourned for him, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by the hand of his servant Ahijah the prophet.

And the days which Jeroboam reigned, were two and twenty years: and he slept with his fathers, and Nadab his son reigned in his stead.

ANNOTATIONS AND REFLECTIONS.

Jeroboam had distinguished himself by his valour and industry, which induced Solomon to fix upon him as a

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proper person for the post he appointed him to; he seems to have been of a very aspiring temper, and to have entertained a *secret wish* to reign over Israel; I need not tell you, it would have been a *fruitless* one, if Solomon had not forfeited the *divine protection*: that Jeroboam might not however, suppose, that he gained dominion over the LORD's people by his *own courage or abilities*, a PROPHET was sent to declare the LORD's intention of *rending* the kingdom, and giving the government of *ten tribes* to him; and at the same time to inform him, *why* Solomon's memory was disgraced, and to promise Jeroboam the establishment of the kingdom of Israel in his *family*, if he would imitate David in his *piety and obedience to the commands of God*.

Ahijah, it is supposed, clad *himself* in a new garment, in order to give Jeroboam a sign; for it was customary for prophets to make use of such methods, that their predictions might be more *striking*: in the present instance, the *ten pieces* given in the LORD's name to Jeroboam, were a *token of conveyance* of the tribes to him.

Jeroboam soon forgot the admonitions of the prophet, and brought the *curse* of God upon himself by the abominable practice of idolatry. It is likely that he apprehended Rehoboam would have the advantage, and entice the people back to himself, if Israel continued to resort to the Temple at JERUSALEM; he therefore studied for an expedient to prevent their doing so.

In Solomon's reign *the people built them high places on every high hill, and under every green tree; and did according to all the abominations of the nations, which the*

LORD *cast out, before the children of Israel*; they were therefore easily induced to forsake the LORD.

Jeroboam knew that he had not means to build a Temple to vie with that of Solomon, but something he thought he must do to prevent the desertion of his people; having resided for a long time in Egypt, he wished to form an alliance with that country, with a view to strengthen his power. The Egyptians had two oxen which they worshipped; one at the city of Memphis, called Apis; the other at Hierapolis, called Mnevis; that he might therefore gain the favour of this people, he made idols in the form of theirs, and placed them likewise in different parts of *his kingdom. Dan was famous in the time of Micah, for his teraphim; and Bethel was esteemed a sacred place on account of Jacob's vision of the ladder, and the LORD's frequent appearance to him; Jeroboam therefore contrived to please the Egyptians, by setting up a form of worship like theirs, and to gratify his own subjects in the choice of such places as had long been reputed sacred.

Zoan, the city at which the new race of Egyptian kings resided, was not far from the borders of Canaan; it was the interest of former kings to be upon good terms with David's race; but Shishak had cause to fear, that Solomon's son would be ready to join the *deposed* family in Egypt; for this reason, it was politick for him to encourage Jeroboam, who was an usurper also.

All the order of priests and Levites adhered to the Temple service, therefore they drew the displeasure of

* See vol. ii. p. 255.

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Jeroboam upon them; and having occasion for ministers, he chose such as you have read of. This was a great act of presumption, but he stopt at nothing to effect his ambitious views; for without the least regard to the *ordinances* of the LORD, he instituted *new festivals*; so that he totally subverted the publick worship, and the people plunged themselves headlong into the grossest idolatry, and entirely forsook the LORD; but the SUPREME BEING, in his infinite mercy, vouchsafed to call them to *repentance*, by sending a prophet, and working such miracles as one would have thought must have converted them.

The prediction which the prophet delivered respecting JOSIAH, was a very remarkable one, and you will find it was afterwards exactly accomplished. * We are told, that this young prophet came to a very *untimely end*; for he suffered himself to be persuaded by another prophet, who pretended to be also inspired, to go to *his house*, instead of obeying the LORD's commands, which he had received *himself* by *divine inspiration*: to punish him for thus inconsiderately *preferring* the word of *a man* to *the word of God*, he was torn to pieces by a lion (to save him from which, he was perhaps directed to return home another way.) This punishment appears very severe, because it seems that he really thought the old prophet spake truth; but we may suppose, GOD *permitted* him to be *slain* for a warning to others, which was particularly necessary in the *land of Israel* in *those times*; and as I have before observed, whenever it is the DIVINE WILL to inflict judgments, which to *human apprehension* appear *undeserv-*

* 1 Kings, ch. xiii.

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ed; we must recollect, that this life is not the whole of our existence, but there is a future state, where God will bring every work into judgment; and every secret thought, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.

The mercy of God was shewn to Jeroboam, in warning him of the destruction he would bring on his family; and also to his son the good youth Abijah, by taking him into a happier state: this death, which was a punishment to the parent, was a blessing to the child.

The LORD threatened by the mouth of his prophet, that “*he would give Israel up, because of the sin of Jeroboam, who did sin, and who made Israel to sin.*” You must not from this suppose, that Israel would have been punished for the wickedness of their sovereign if the people had adhered to their duty. They well knew that Jeroboam’s proceedings were directly *contrary to the law of God*; yet they *willing’y* made themselves *partakers* of his crime, and therefore deserved to be given up. It is called *Jeroboam’s sin*, because he introduced it; but the people must have been inclined to idolatry, or they would not have been so easily influenced by him.

Jeroboam and the Israelites were as *undeserving* as the people of Judah, of God’s *favour*; and one is lost in admiration of the divine forbearance, that they were suffered to remain on the face of the earth!

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THE REIGN OF ABIJAM, CALLED ALSO ABIJAH
KING OF JUDAH.

NOW in the eighteenth year of king Jeroboam the son of Nebat, reigned Abijam over Judah.

Three years reigned he in Jerusalem; and his mother's name was Maachah, the daughter of Abishalom.

And he walked in all the sins of his father, which he had done before him: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father.

Nevertheless, for David's sake did the LORD his God give him a lamp in Jerusalem, to set up his son after him, and to establish Jerusalem:

Because David did that which was right in the eyes of the LORD, and turned not aside from any thing that he commanded him all the days of his life, save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite.

And there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all the days of his life.

And Abijam set the battle in array with an army of valiant men of war, even four hundred thousand chosen men : Jeroboam also set the battle in array against him with eight hundred thousand chosen men, being mighty men of valour.

And Abijam stood up upon mount Zemaraim, which is in mount Ephraim, and said, Hear me, thou Jeroboam, and all Israel.

Ought ye not to know, that the LORD God of Israel gave the kingdom over Israel to David for ever, even to him and to his sons by a covenant of salt ?

Yet Jeroboam the son of Nebat, the servant of Solomon the son of David, is risen up and hath rebelled against his lord.

And there are gathered unto him vain men the children of Belial, and have strengthened themselves against Rehoboam the son of Solomon, when Rehoboam was young and tender-hearted, and could not withstand them.

And now ye think to withstand the kingdom of the LORD in the hand of the sons of David ; and ye be a great multitude, and there are with you golden calves, which Jeroboam made you for gods.

Have

Have ye not cast out the priests of the LORD the sons of Aaron, and the Levites, and have made you priests after the manner of the nations of other lands? so that whosoever cometh to consecrate himself with a young bullock and seven rams, the same may be a priest of them that are no gods.

But as for us, the LORD is our God, and we have not forsaken him: and the priests which minister unto the LORD are the sons of Aaron, and the Levites wait upon their business:

And they burn unto the LORD every morning and every evening burnt-sacrifices and sweet incense: the shew-bread also set they in order upon the pure table; and the candlestick of gold with the lamps thereof, to burn every evening: for we keep the charge of the LORD our GOD: but ye have forsaken him.

And behold, God himself is with us for our captain, and his priests with sounding trumpets to cry alarm against you. O children of Israel, fight ye not against the LORD GOD of your fathers: for ye shall not prosper.

But Jeroboam caused an ambushment to come about behind them: for they were before

fore Judah, and the ambushment was behind them.

And when Judah looked back, behold, the battle was before and behind: and they cried unto the LORD, and the priests sounded with the trumpets.

Then the men of Judah gave a shout: and as the men of Judah shouted, it came to pass, that God smote Jeroboam and all Israel before Abijam and Judah.

And the children of Israel fled before Judah: and God delivered them into their hand.

And Abijam and his people slew them with a great slaughter: so there fell down slain of Israel five hundred thousand chosen men.

Thus the children of Israel were brought under at that time, and the children of Judah prevailed, because they relied upon the LORD GOD of their fathers.

And Abijam pursued after Jeroboam, and took cities from him, Beth-el with the towns thereof, and Jeshanah with the towns thereof, and Ephraim with the towns thereof.

Neither did Jeroboam recover strength again in the days of Abijam, and the LORD struck him, and he died.

But

But Abijam waxed mighty, and married fourteen wives, and had twenty and two sons, and sixteen daughters.

And the rest of the acts of Abijam, and his ways, and his sayings, are written in the story of the prophet Iddo.

And Abijam slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the city of David; and Asa his son reigned in his stead.

ANNOTATIONS AND REFLECTIONS.

In the speech which Abijam addressed to Jeroboam and the Israelites, calling upon them *in the name of the LORD* to forsake idolatry, and return to their duty; he acted agreeably to the will of God, and as became the descendant of David: Jeroboam on the contrary, *presumptuously opposed* the LORD, and depending on his superior army, resolved to attempt the destruction of Judah, though he had formerly been forbidden by a divine command, to lift up his hand against the race of David; the LORD therefore, not only delivered Judah, but enabled Abijam, by his Almighty power, to obtain a wonderful victory over the Israelites; and we are taught to regard the *DIVINE interposition* on this occasion, as a proof of God's remembrance of David, to whom he had promised, that his fidelity should be finally rewarded by blessings on his posterity, though for reasons which must appear just, they would be assisted for a time.

If Abijam and the people of Judah had continued steadfast in the principles which seem to have actuated them on this occasion, the favour of the LORD would have remained with them for their *own sakes*; but we are told, that this king *walked in all the sins of his father*, for he removed not the high places, neither did he destroy idolatry as he might have done, when he had Bethel in his power; and found by experience, that not only his people would stand by him in the attempt, but that he had the greatest reason to expect, that the LORD would himself assist him in the vindication of his honour: for this neglect, it is likely that the LORD shortened the days of Abijam.

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S E C T. LV.

THE REIGN OF NADAB KING OF ISRAEL—THE
REIGN OF BAASHA KING OF ISRAEL.

AND Nadab the son of Jeroboam began to reign over Israel, in the second year of Afa king of Judah, and reigned over Israel two years.

And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of his father, and in his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin.

And Baasha the son of Ahijah, of the house of Issachar, conspired against him; and Baasha smote him at Gibbethon, which belongeth to the Philistines, (for Nadab, and all Israel laid siege to Gibbethon)

And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of Jeroboam, and in his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin.

And it came to pass when he reigned, that he smote all the house of Jeroboam, he left not to Jeroboam any that breathed, until he had destroyed him, according unto the saying of the LORD, which he spake by his servant Ahijah the Shilonite.

Because

Because of the sins of Jeroboam which he sinned, and which he made Israel to sin, by his provocation wherewith he provoked the LORD GOD of Israel to anger.

And there was war between Afa and Baasha king of Israel all their days.

Then the word of the LORD came to Jehu the son of Hanani, against Baasha, saying,

Forasmuch as I exalted thee out of the dust, and made thee prince over my people Israel, and thou hast walked in the way of Jeroboam, and hast made my people Israel to sin, to provoke me to anger with their sins:

Behold, I will take away the posterity of Baasha, and the posterity of his house: and will make thy house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat.

Him that dieth of Baasha in the city, shall the dogs eat: and him that dieth of his in the fields, shall the fowls of the air eat.

So Baasha slept with his fathers, and was buried in Tirzah, and Elah his son reigned in his stead.

And also by the hand of the prophet Jehu the son of Hanani, came the word of the LORD against Baasha, and against his house,

even

even for all the evil that he did in the sight of the LORD, in provoking him to anger with the work of his hands, in being like the house of Jeroboam, and because he killed him.

ANNOTATIONS AND REFLECTIONS.

Nadab's wicked reign was of short duration, for he shut himself totally out from God's favour by idolatrous practices and hardened obduracy, and therefore the treachery of Baasha was suffered to succeed against him. The cruelty of this ambitious man in destroying so many of his predecessor's relations, proceeded from his own *bad heart*, and was therefore reckoned amongst the *crimes* for which he was cut off. Baasha did not act in consequence of any express command from God to destroy the posterity of Jeroboam, but in order to usurp the throne, and was therefore guilty of *murder*; you must not suppose that he was *instigated* by God, but only that *he* was *not restrained*, as he would have been, if Jeroboam and his family had endeavoured to secure the divine protection. You have already met with instances in the course of this history, of the LORD's taking compassion on repentant sinners, and preventing that destruction which would have fallen on them if they had persisted in their sin, particularly in the case of David. Jeroboam and his race, would have been preserved in like manner, if they had imitated David's example: so that the LORD might justly say to Baasha, by the mouth of his prophet,

“ *Forasmuch*

428 GOD'S GOODNESS AND JUSTICE.

“ Forasmuch as I exalted thee out of the dust, and made thee prince over my people Israel, &c.” because it would have been *impossible* for Baasha to have exalted himself contrary to the DIVINE WILL.

We have cause to admire the goodness and justice of GOD in every instance, for they were both displayed, even in his dispensations towards those bad kings, who resisted his authority and despised his power.

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S E C T. LVI.

THE REIGN OF ASA KING OF JUDAH.

SO Abijam slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the city of David. And Asa his son reigned in his stead. In his days the land was quiet ten years.

And Asa did that which was good and right in the eyes of the LORD his GOD.

For he took away the altars of the strange gods, and the high places, and brake down the images, and cut down the groves.

And commanded Judah to seek the LORD God of their fathers, and to do the law and the commandment.

Also he took away out of all the cities of Judah the high places and the images : and the kingdom was quiet before him.

And he built fenced cities in Judah : for the land had rest, and he had no war in those years ; because the LORD had given him rest.

Therefore he said unto Judah let us build these cities ; and make about them walls and towers, gates and bars, while the land is yet before

before us; because we have fought the LORD our God, we have fought him, and he hath given us rest on every side. So they built and prospered.

And Afa had an army of men that bare targets and spears, out of Judah three hundred thousand, and out of Benjamin, that bare shields and drew bows, two hundred and fourscore thousand: all these were mighty men of valour.

And there came out against them Zerah the Ethiopian with an host of a thousand thousand, and three hundred chariots: and he came unto Mareshah.

Then Afa went out against him, and they set the battle in array in the valley of Zephathah at Mareshah.

And Afa cried unto the LORD his God, and said, LORD, it is nothing with thee to help, whether with many, or with them that have no power: help us, O LORD our God: for we rest on thee, and in thy name we go against this multitude: O LORD, thou art our God; let not man prevail against thee.

So the LORD smote the Ethiopians before Afa, and before Judah: and the Ethiopians fled.

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And Aſa and the people that were with him purſued them unto Gerar: and the Ethiopians were overthrown, that they could not recover themſelves: for they were deſtroyed before the LORD and before his hoſt; and they carried away very much ſpoil.

And they ſmote all the cities round about Gerar; for the fear of the LORD came upon them: and they ſpoiled all the cities: for there was exceeding much ſpoil in them.

They ſmote alſo the tents of cattle, and carried away ſheep and camels in abundance, and returned to Jeruſalem.

And the Spirit of God came upon Azariah the ſon of Oded.

And he went out to meet Aſa, and ſaid unto him, Hear ye me, Aſa, and all Judah and Benjamin; the LORD is with you, while ye be with him; and if ye ſeek him, he will be found of you: but if ye forſake him, he will forſake you.

Now for a long ſeaſon Iſrael hath been without the true God, and without a teaching prieſt, and without law.

But when they in their trouble did turn unto the LORD God of Iſrael, and fought him, he was found of them.

And

And in those times there was no peace to him that went out, nor to him that came in, but great vexations were upon all the inhabitants of the countries.

And nation was destroyed of nation, and city of city : for God did vex them with all adversity.

Be ye strong therefore, and let not your hands be weak : for your work shall be rewarded.

And when Afa heard these words, and the prophecy of Oded the prophet, he took courage, and put away the abominable idols out of all the land of Judah and Benjamin, and out of the cities which he had taken from mount Ephraim, and renewed the altar of the LORD that was before the porch of the LORD.

And he gathered all Judah and Benjamin, and the strangers with them out of Ephraim and Manasseh, and out of Simeon : for they fell to him out of Israel in abundance, when they saw that the LORD his GOD was with him.

So they gathered themselves together at Jerusalem in the third month, in the fifteenth year of the reign of Afa.

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And they offered unto the LORD the same time, of the spoil which they had brought, seven hundred oxen, and seven thousand sheep.

And they entered into a covenant to seek the LORD GOD of their fathers, with all their heart and with all their soul ;

That whosoever would not seek the LORD GOD of Israel should be put to death, whether small or great, whether man or woman.

And they sware unto the LORD with a loud voice, and with shouting, and with trumpets, and with cornets.

And all Judah rejoiced at the oath : for they had sworn with all their heart, and sought him with their whole desire, and he was found of them : and the LORD gave them rest round about.

And also concerning Maachah the mother of Afa the king, he removed her from being queen, because she had made an idol in a grove : and Afa cut down her idol and stamped it, and burned it at the brook Kidron.

But the high places were not taken away out of Israel : nevertheless, the heart of Afa was perfect all his days.

And there was no more war unto the five and thirtieth year of the reign of Afa.

In the six and thirtieth year of the reign of Afa, Baasha king of Israel came up against Judah, and built Ramah, to the intent that he might let none go out or come in to Afa king of Judah.

Then Afa brought out silver and gold out of the treasures of the house of the LORD, and of the king's house, and sent to Ben-hadad king of Syria that dwelt at Damascus, saying,

There is a league between me and thee, as there was between my father and thy father: behold, I have sent thee silver and gold; go break thy league with Baasha king of Israel, that he may depart from me.

And Ben-hadad hearkened unto king Afa, and sent the captains of his armies against the cities of Israel: and they smote Ijon, and Dan, and Abel-maim, and all the store-cities of Naphthali.

And it came to pass, when Baasha heard it, that he left off building of Ramah, and let his work cease.

Then Afa the king took all Judah; and they carried away the stones of Ramah, and

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the timber thereof, wherewith Baasha was building; and he built therewith Geba and Mizpeh.

And at that time Hanani the seer came to Afa king of Judah, and said unto him, Because thou hast relied on the king of Syria, and not relied on the LORD thy God, therefore is the host of the king of Syria escaped out of thine hand.

Were not the Ethiopians and the Lubims a huge host, with very many chariots and horsemen? yet, because thou didst rely on the LORD, he delivered them into thine hand.

For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect towards him. Herein thou hast done foolishly: therefore from henceforth thou shalt have wars.

Then Afa was wroth with the seer, and put him in a prison-house; for he was in a rage with him because of this thing. And Afa oppressed some of the people the same time.

And Afa in the thirty and ninth year of his reign was diseased in his feet, his disease was exceeding great: yet in his disease he sought not to the LORD, but to the physicians.

And Afa slept with his fathers, and died in the one and fortieth year of his reign.

And they buried him in his own sepulchres, which he had made for himself in the city of David, and laid him in the bed which was filled with sweet odours and divers kinds of spices prepared by the apothecaries art: and they made a very great burning for him.

ANNOTATIONS AND REFLECTIONS.

Happily for himself, as well as for the land of Judah, Afa was in the beginning of his reign, a prince of a very different disposition from his father Abijah. He employed the peace with which he was blessed, in reforming many abuses, and made great advances towards extirpating idolatry, and for this purpose destroyed all the *high places* in which there were any altars erected to strange gods*, but did not venture to take away those where God alone was worshipped, because they were at that time regarded as sacred, on account of the former appearance of God, or some other miraculous event.

Maachah the mother of Afa, is supposed to have been not only an idolater, but a priestess to one of the idols: the king's behaviour to her was therefore perfectly consistent with his duty to God.

It seems that Ahijah in his reign, had set aside, according to usual custom, some of the spoil to be dedi-

* This explanation accounts for the seeming disagreement between ch. xiv. ver. 3. of the 2d of Chron. and ch. xv. ver. 12. of the 1st of Kings. See Patrick's Comment.

cated to the LORD; but his piety did not continue long enough for him to compleat his purpose.

Zerah, the king who invaded Jerusalem, is supposed to have come from Arabia: notwithstanding he brought such an astonishing army, his attempt was fruitless; for as Israel confided in the LORD, the *rock of their salvation*, it was in vain for *human power* to strive against them. Though GOD did not in these days honour his people with a *visible token* of his *immediate PRESENCE* in the Tabernacle, he still gave repeated proofs that he was near at hand, to hear their prayers, and lend them assistance if they would but seek him with a willing heart: his servants the prophets, were occasionally sent to admonish and encourage them, that they might not forget the promises made to their forefathers, nor fall into despair from the apprehension, that GOD had utterly forsaken them.

As long as Afa continued to rely on the LORD, he was blessed with prosperity; but you find his zeal abated, and instead of applying to GOD, as on a former occasion, he engaged the aid of the king of Syria, by means of some of the treasures of the house of GOD. In this Afa committed a great sin; for though in cases of extreme necessity, they were allowed to employ things sacred, in the defence of their country, they had no such pretence here, because GOD had wonderfully protected them against the Arabian king: why, therefore, should Afa doubt the efficacy of divine power to overcome Baasha? Besides, it was an act unworthy of a king of Judah, to bribe any one to break a league or covenant; and you find, that if he had not taken this step, the LORD would have delivered the Syrians into

438 ASA'S FUNERAL HONOURS.

his hand : for in respect to the rise and fall of kingdoms, nothing happens by chance; *the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the WHOLE EARTH, to shew himself strong* in behalf of those whose heart is perfect towards him.

The prophet Hanani was sent to reprove Aſa : he did not receive this prophet with thankfulness, as he ought to have done ; but affronted the honour of the LORD, by behaving with cruelty to his servant, and proceeded to the oppression of his subjects also. This king was, it seems, afflicted with a disease in his feet, supposed to have been the gout, this made him fretful and impatient ; but no excuse can be made for his distrusting God, and depending entirely on the physicians, because medicines can only prove efficacious by God's blessing ; if we pray for that, we may hope for relief by the means he has graciously appointed, to ease our pains, and restore health to the body.

In one part of the Section you have been reading, it is said, that *Aſa's heart was perfect all his days* ; you are not to understand from this, that he made no deviations from his duty : on the contrary, you find he committed great offences : this expression therefore means, that he never discovered any inclination to forsake the worship of the LORD, but continued, to the end of his life, to discountenance idolatry.

We are told that a great burning was made for Aſa ; by which is supposed to be meant, that he ordered his body to be burnt with a great quantity of spices and perfumes, and his bones and ashes to be collected and buried in a sepulchre which he had provided, instead of being interred as the custom of the Jews then was.

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S E C T. LVII.

THE REIGNS OF ELAH, ZIMRI, TIBNI, AND
OMRI, KINGS OF ISRAEL.

IN the twenty and sixth year of Afa king of Judah, began Elah the son of Baasha to reign over Israel in Tirzah, two years.

And his servant Zimri (captain of half his chariots) conspired against him as he was in Tirzah, drinking himself drunk in the house of Arza steward of his house in Tirzah.

And Zimri went in and smote him, and killed him, in the twenty and seventh year of Afa king of Judah, and reigned in his stead.

And it came to pass when he began to reign, as soon as he sat on the throne, he slew all the men of the house of Baasha, he left him not one neither of his kinsfolk nor of his friends.

Thus did Zimri destroy all the house of Baasha, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake against Baasha by Jehu the prophet;

For all the sins of Baasha, and the sins of Elah his son, by which they sinned, and by which they made Israel to sin, in provoking the LORD GOD of Israel to anger with their vanities.

Now the rest of the acts of Elah, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

In the twenty and seventh year of Asa king of Judah, did Zimri reign seven days in Tirzah: and the people were encamped against Gibbethon, which belonged to the Philistines.

And the people that were encamped heard say, Zimri hath conspired, and hath also slain the king: wherefore all Israel made Omri the captain of the host, king over Israel that day in the camp.

And Omri went up from Gibbethon, and all Israel with him, and they besieged Tirzah.

And it came to pass when Zimri saw that the city was taken, that he went into the palace of the king's house, and burnt the king's house over him with fire, and died;

For his sins which he sinned in doing evil in the sight of the LORD, in walking in the way

way of Jeroboam, and in his sin which he did to make Israel sin.

Now the rest of the acts of Zimri, and his treason that he wrought, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

Then were the people of Israel divided into two parts: half of the people followed Tibni the son of Ginath, to make him king; and half followed Omri.

But the people that followed Omri, prevailed against the people that followed Tibni the son of Ginath: so Tibni died, and Omri reigned.

In the thirty and one year of Afa king of Judah began Omri to reign over Israel twelve years: six years reigned he in Tirzah.

And he bought the hill Samaria of Shemer, for two talents of silver, and built on the hill, and called the name of the city which he built, after the name of Shemer, owner of the hill Samaria.

But Omri wrought evil in the eyes of the LORD, and did worse than all that were before him.

For he walked in all the ways of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and in his sin where-

with he made Israel to sin, to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger with their vanities.

So Omri slept with his fathers, and was buried in Samaria, and Ahab his son reigned in his stead.

ANNOTATIONS AND REFLECTIONS.

The threatening which the LORD denounced by the prophet Jehu the son of Hanani, against the family of Baasha, *that they should be cut off like the house of Jeroboam*, was soon exactly fulfilled; but Zimri, who destroyed them, imitated wicked Jeroboam in his idolatrous practices, for which his life and reign were shortened. He died by his own hand, but might still be said *to be cut off by the LORD*, because he would have been preserved from despair, if he had not given himself up to incorrigible wickedness.

It is said of Omri, that he did worse than all who were before him; from whence we may conjecture, that he introduced more abominable idolatries than even Jeroboam did, and compelled the Israelites to worship the calves, and by severe laws, (called in another part of scripture *the statutes of Omri*) restrained them from going to Jerusalem to worship.

All the kings who had reigned over Israel from the time of the division of the kingdom, were remarkable for their impiety.

S E C T. LVIII.

THE BEGINNING OF THE REIGN OF JEHOSEPHAT KING OF JUDAH.

AND Jehoshaphat the son of Ase reign-
ed in the stead of his father, and
strengthened himself against Israel.

And he placed forces in all the fenced
cities of Judah, and set garrisons in all the
land of Judah, and in the cities of Ephraim
which Ase his father had taken.

And the LORD was with Jehoshaphat, be-
cause he walked in the first ways of his fa-
ther David, and fought not unto Baalim;

But fought to the LORD GOD of his fa-
ther, and walked in his commandments, and
not after the doings of Israel.

Therefore the LORD stablished the king-
dom in his hand; and all Judah brought to
Jehoshaphat presents; and he had riches and
honour in abundance.

And his heart was lifted up in the ways
of the LORD: moreover, he took away the
high places and groves out of Judah.

And Jehoshaphat waxed great exceedingly : and he built in Judah castles, and cities of store.

And he had much business in the cities of Judah : and the men of war, mighty men of valour, were in Jerusalem.

ANNOTATIONS AND REFLECTIONS.

Jehoshaphat seems to have been educated with great care, and to have received from his father*, early impressions of piety; he began his reign with that disposition of mind which his station required, and endeavoured to bring about a thorough reformation in Judah : he not only took away the high places, but *sent to his princes, to teach in the cities of Judah, and with them he sent priests and Levites, who had the book of the law with them.*

It † is supposed that the princes admonished the people, and required them to observe the Law, which the priests and Levites came to explain; obliging them to treat those who were sent by the king's command on so important an errand, with respect, and hear them with attention. In those days there was, what is properly called by one of the prophets, a *spiritual famine*. There were then no publick synagogues, and publick teachers, as were afterwards instituted in the kingdom; and the people were fallen into such a state of general

* It is supposed that the word Aza, should be substituted for David, in the xviiith ch. of 2d Chron. † See Stackhouse on the Bible.

ignorance,

ignorance, that there was scarcely a copy of the law to be found in the whole country; for which reason it was thought adviseable and necessary, for the priests and Levites to carry one with them.

We read, that Jehoshaphat's subjects amounted to an astonishing number; his valiant men are computed at 1,100,000: his dominions included not only Judah and Benjamin (which were incorporated so as to become one tribe) but reached into the tribes of Dan, Ephraim, and Simeon, into Arabia, and the country of the Philistines: in a word, from Beersheba to the mountains of Ephraim one way, from Jordan to the Mediterranean Sea another. The Levites also, whom Jeroboam thrust out, joined themselves to Judah; and multitudes of other persons who abhorred idolatry, followed them from all parts of Israel; there were besides, great numbers of foreigners in Judah; so that we may easily conceive, Jeroboam's kingdom to have been as populous as it is represented to be.

The great pains this good king took to propagate religion, not only procured him the favour of God, but gained the hearts of his subjects; and the Lord struck such a *dread* of him into his enemies, that instead of invading his dominions, the Philistines came voluntarily, and paid him a tribute which had been suspended for many years; and the Arabians also sent a great number of flocks and herds, as an acknowledgment of their homage.

S E C T. LIX.

THE BEGINNING OF THE REIGN OF AHAB KING
OF ISRAEL—AND THE LIFE OF ELIJAH THE
PROPHET.

AND in the thirty-eighth year of Aſa king of Judah, began Ahab the ſon of Omri to reign over Iſrael in Samaria.

And Ahab the ſon of Omri did evil in the ſight of the LORD, above all that were before him.

And it came to paſs, as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the ſins of Jeroboam the ſon of Nebat; that he took to wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Zidonians, and went and ſerved Baal, and worſhipped him.

And he reared up an altar for Baal, in the houſe of Baal, which he had built in Samaria.

And Ahab made a grove; and Ahab did more to provoke the LORD GOD of Iſrael to anger, than all the kings of Iſrael that were before him.

In

In his days did Hiel the Beth-elite build Jericho: he laid the foundation thereof in Abiram, his first-born, and set up the gates thereof in his youngest son Segub, according to the word of the LORD which he spake by Joshua the son of Nun.

And Elijah the Tishbite who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the LORD GOD of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.

And the word of the LORD came unto him, saying,

Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan.

And it shall be that thou shalt drink of the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there.

So he went, and did according unto the word of the LORD: for he went and dwelt by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan.

And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening: and he drank of the brook.

And

And it came to pass after a while that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land.

And the word of the LORD came unto him, saying,

Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Zidon, and dwell there, : behold I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee.

So he arose, and went to Zarephath : and when he came to the gate of the city, behold, the widow woman was there gathering of sticks : and he called to her, and said, Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink.

And as she was going to fetch it, he called to her, and said, Bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thine hand.

And she said, As the LORD thy GOD liveth, I have not a cake, but an handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse : and behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in, and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die.

And Elijah said unto her, Fear not ; go and do as thou hast said : but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it unto

me, and after make for thee and for thy son.

For thus saith the LORD GOD of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the LORD sendeth rain upon the earth.

And she went and did according to the saying of Elijah: and she, and he, and her house did eat many days.

And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the LORD which he spake by Elijah.

And it came to pass after these things, that the son of the woman, the mistress of the house fell sick, and his sickness was so fore, that there was no breath left in him.

And she said unto Elijah, What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God? art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son?

And he said unto her, Give me thy son. And he took him out of her bosom, and carried him up into a loft, where he abode, and laid him upon his own bed.

And he cried unto the LORD, and said, O LORD my God, hast thou also brought
evil

evil upon the widow, with whom I sojourn, by slaying her son?

And he stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried unto the LORD, and said, O LORD my GOD, I pray thee, let this child's soul come into him again.

And the LORD heard the voice of Elijah, and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived.

And Elijah took the child, and brought him down out of the chamber into the house, and delivered him unto his mother: and Elijah said, See, thy son liveth.

And the woman said to Elijah, Now by this I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of the LORD in thy mouth is truth.

ANNOTATIONS AND REFLECTIONS.

You find, my dear, that there was at this time a great contrast between the *two* kingdoms; for whilst the king of Judah was exerting every means for *propagating true religion*, the king of Israel employed himself in *exalting idols*: Ahab not only continued the worship of the calves, which Jeroboam had set up, but married Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal, king of Tyre, whom he suffered to introduce new abominations; and to gratify her impiety, he built an altar to Baal.

That

ELIJAH SENT TO AHAB. 451

That Ahab might not plead the example of his father, and pretend *ignorance* of the LORD, Elijah the prophet was graciously sent to warn and admonish him. Thesbe*, the birth-place of this extraordinary person, was on the other side Jordan in the land of Gad; he is supposed to have been the *father* or *chief* of the prophets of the age, a man of a great and elevated soul, of a generous and undaunted spirit, a zealous defender of the laws of God, and a just avenger of a violation of his honour.

It was the LORD's will to send a famine on Israel; and that Ahab might not impute it to natural causes, Elijah informed him, that it was the hand of God, who denied the usual refreshments to the earth, for the wickedness of him and his people, and that the drought should continue.

As the LORD foresaw that the completion of this prediction would draw Ahab's resentment upon Elijah, in order to preserve this prophet from the cruel effects of the king's rage, and to shew his *almighty power*, God commanded Elijah to retire to the brook Cherith, which was near the river Jordan.

If we had not been told that the LORD sent the ravens, which fed Elijah, it would be quite astonishing to think, "that creatures so voracious, and seemingly of such a cruel nature, should perform so kind an office;" but with this explanation the wonder ceases, *for all things are possible to God*.

The place to which Elijah was next sent, was a city of Sidon. The woman who was appointed to receive him was, we may suppose, a proper object of the di-

* Calmet's Dictionary.

vine compassion; for she seems to have had great reverence for the SUPREME BEING, though she was not of the *house of JACOB*; the intercourse which the Sidonians had long had with the Israelites, had brought to her knowledge the *name* of the LORD JEHOVAH, and it is likely she heard that he sent his prophets to admonish and instruct his people: these holy men were usually distinguished by their habit, and therefore the woman might guess from his appearance, that Elijah was one of them: if her readiness to supply him with water, proceeded from this surmise, it shewed her veneration for GOD; it was at least a proof of both her benevolence and humility, as Elijah had reason to expect, in those times of scarcity, that she would have demanded a reward for her services, or desired him to provide for his own necessities, especially as he was a stranger to her.

This transaction proves that GOD actually is, as the scriptures represent him to be, "*a FATHER to the fatherless, and a HUSBAND to the widow*;" and the relation of it must afford comfort to all persons in extreme necessity, since it proves, that no condition is so hopeless, but the providence of GOD can afford relief.

It is scarcely possible for any person to be in more indigent circumstances than the poor widow of Zarephath was, in losing her husband; she seems to have been deprived of every earthly friend, and knew not where even to procure a little food, to dress the last morsel of nourishment she had a prospect of obtaining for the sustenance of herself and child; she lived in a country, where the inhabitants were so devoted to vice and sensuality, as to be insensible, even in plentiful times,

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times, to the distressed of a fellow-creature; for we find, the heathens described by David, as *oppressing* the fatherless and widow; and therefore we may suppose them during the famine, wholly intent on their own preservation.

This woman had heard of the wonders wrought by the God of Israel, and we may imagine, had offered up her fervent prayers to him for deliverance; but with scarcely a gleam of hope that he would hearken to the petitions of one who was a stranger to his holy worship, and therefore she resolved to submit with patience to her fate, expecting that death would put a speedy end to her misery. Can we sufficiently admire the piety and faith which this poor widow testified, by her ready belief of the prophet's assurance, that God would supply her wants, and her immediate compliance with Elijah's commands, to make a cake for him, before she prepared one for herself and child? Her *trial* was great, and great was also her *reward*; for the LORD graciously made her a partaker of the miraculous support which he vouchsafed to his chosen servant; and not only relieved the necessities of herself and child, but gave her an opportunity of exercising the benevolence of her mind, in doing good offices for a worthy friend: there is no doubt, but Elijah also received great comfort from the conversation of this worthy woman, and rewarded her kindness by teaching her how to praise and adore their DIVINE BENEFCTOR.

It is true, we have no PROPHETS in these days, neither does the ALMIGHTY relieve our distressed by *supernatural* means; but, to a considering mind, the *annual increase of corn*, from a *small* quantity of grain,

is

is full as wonderful as the multiplying of the widow's meal and oil ; and we may daily hear of persons relieved from distress by the most unexpected means. To a common eye, these things appear accidental ; but by the history of Elijah, and the widow of Zarephath, we are taught to ascribe them to the *goodness* of God ; since what he has done for *ONE*, we may conclude he will do for *ALL his creatures* in some way or other, if they do not render themselves unworthy of his mercy, by mistrust and impiety.

The miracle of raising the widow's son (who seems to have been afflicted as a farther trial of her faith) needs no comment, for you must discover that it was another act of *ALMIGHTY POWER*.

You find, my dear, that God *was perfectly true to his promises* ; for whenever the king and people, either of Israel or Judah, were mindful of their duty, he blessed them with *prosperity* ; and as constantly brought *adversity upon them*, when they *forsook his worship* : if they would but have been a *righteous* people, what happiness might they have enjoyed ! what miseries would they have escaped !

S E C T. LX.

THE HISTORY OF AHAB KING OF ISRAEL
CONTINUED—BAAL'S PROPHETS SLAIN.

AND it came to pass after many days, that the word of the LORD came to Elijah in the third year, saying, Go shew thyself to Ahab; and I will send rain upon the earth.

And Elijah went to shew himself to Ahab: and there was a fore famine in Samaria.

And Ahab called Obadiah which was the governor of his house: (now Obadiah feared the LORD greatly:

For it was so, when Jezebel cut off the prophets of the LORD, that Obadiah took an hundred prophets, and hid them by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water.)

And Ahab said unto Obadiah, Go into the land, unto all fountains of water, and unto all brooks: peradventure we may find grass to save the horses and mules alive, that we lose not all the beasts.

So

So they divided the land between them to pass throughout it: Ahab went one way by himself, and Obadiah went another way by himself.

And as Obadiah was in the way, behold, Elijah met him: and he knew him, and fell on his face, and said, Art thou that my lord Elijah?

And he answered him, I am: go tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here.

And he said, What have I sinned, that thou wouldest deliver thy servant into the hand of Ahab, to slay me?

As the LORD thy God liveth, there is no nation or kingdom, whither my lord hath not sent to seek thee: and when they said, He is not there: he took an oath of the kingdom and nation that they found thee not.

And now thou sayest, Go tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here.

And it shall come to pass, as soon as I am gone from thee, that the Spirit of the LORD shall carry thee whither I know not; and so when I come and tell Ahab, and he cannot find thee, he shall slay me: but I thy servant fear the LORD from my youth.

Was

Was it not told my lord, what I did when Jezebel slew the prophets of the LORD? how I hid an hundred men of the LORD's prophets by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water?

And now thou sayest, Go tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here: and he shall slay me.

And Elijah said, As the LORD of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, I will surely shew myself unto him to day.

So Obadiah went to meet Ahab, and told him: and Ahab went to meet Elijah.

And it came to pass when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him Art thou he that troubleth Israel.

And he answered, I have not troubled Israel, but thou and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the LORD, and thou hast followed Baalam.

Now therefore send, and gather to me all Israel unto mount Carmel, and the prophets of Baal four hundred and fifty, and the prophets of the groves four hundred, which eat at Jezebel's table.

So Ahab sent unto all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together unto mount Carmel.

And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be GOD, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word.

Then said Elijah unto the people, I, even I only remain a prophet of the LORD; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men.

Let them therefore give us two bullocks, and let them choose one bullock for themselves, and cut it in pieces, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under, and I will dress the other bullock, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under:

And call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the LORD: and the god that answereth by fire, let him be GOD. And all the people answered, and said, It is well spoken.

And Elijah said unto the prophets of Baal, Choose you one bullock for yourselves, and dress it first; for ye are many: and call on the name of your gods, but put no fire under.

And they took the bullock which was given them, and they dressed it, and called on the name of Baal from morning even until

noon,

noon, saying, O Baal, hear us. But there was no voice, nor any that answered. And they leaped upon the altar which was made.

And it came to pass at noon, that Elijah mocked them, and said, Cry aloud: for he is a god, either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked.

And they cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with knives, and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them.

And it came to pass, when mid-day was past, and they prophesied until the time of the offering of the evening-sacrifice; that there was neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded.

And Elijah said unto all the people, Come near unto me. And all the people came near unto him: and he repaired the altar of the LORD that was broken down.

And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, unto whom the word of the LORD came, saying, Israel shall be thy name.

And with the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD: and he made a

trench about the altar, as great as would contain two measures of seed.

And he put the wood in order, and cut the bullock in pieces, and laid him on the wood, and said, Fill four barrels with water, and pour it on the burnt-sacrifice, and on the wood.

And he said, Do it the second time: and they did it the second time. And he said, Do it the third time: and they did it the third time.

And the water ran round about the altar, and he filled the trench also with water.

And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening-sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near and said, LORD GOD of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day, that thou art GOD in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word.

Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the LORD GOD, and that thou hast turned their heart back again.

Then the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt-sacrifice, and the wood, and
the

the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench.

And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The LORD he is the GOD; the LORD, he is the GOD.

And Elijah said unto them, Take the prophets of Baal, let not one of them escape: and they took them, and Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon, and slew them there.

ANNOTATIONS AND REFLECTIONS.

The famine must have been very grievous in the land of Israel, to make it necessary for the king to go himself in search of forage for the cattle.

Obadiah seems to have been a very religious man, and had performed an action which testified his zeal for the LORD, as well as the humanity of his disposition.

The prophets whom Jezebel destroyed, are supposed to have been persons who privately instructed those that were not worshippers of Baal in their duty to God, and encouraged them to the performance of it. They had not the *spirit of prophecy* like Elijah, nor did they offer sacrifices, or burn incense, but were most likely disciples (usually stiled, *sons*) of the prophets belonging to the schools, which I formerly told you Samuel is thought to have first instituted, and which it is imagined, Jezebel intended to destroy.

It may seem strange, that so pious a man as Obadiah was, should be preferred to an high office by Ahab; but it is probable, that he was distinguished for his integrity and abilities, which made it the king's *interest* to employ him: we may suppose that Ahab had not compelled him to bow the knee to Baal, Obadiah therefore was under no necessity of declining the appointment; besides, he might hope to be an instrument of good in the hand of Providence, to the faithful servants of God, of whom there were still many remaining in the land of Israel: indeed we may venture to conclude, that the DIVINE DISPOSER of all events, over-ruled Ahab in raising the good Obadiah to this exalted station, for the very purpose of counteracting Jezebel's wicked scheme of extirpating all the prophets. It is true, she put numbers to death, but there is no doubt of God's having recompensed them for the loss of life in a better world: those who were left behind in such unsettled times, were the most to be pitied; but their preservation was necessary for the propagation of religion; and they had reason to hope, that after a few more transient years, they should join their brethren in a happier state: for Solomon, and other inspired writers, had taught them, "that the SOULS of the righteous are in the hand of God, and that there shall no torment touch them."

*For * though in the sight of the unwise they seemed to die: and their departure is taken for misery,*

And their going from us to be utter destruction: yet they are in peace.

* Wisdom of Solomon, ch. iii.

For though they be punished in the sight of men : yet is their hope full of immortality.

And having been a little chastised, they shall be greatly rewarded : for GOD proved them, and found them worthy for himself.

As gold in the furnace hath he tried them, and received them as a burnt-offering.

And in the time of their visitation they shall shine, and run to and fro like sparks among the stubble.

They shall judge the nations, and have dominion over the people, and their LORD shall reign for ever.

You find it was in vain for Ahab to pursue Elijah ; the same divine power which was so miraculously exerted in sustaining him, prevented Ahab's discovering the place of his retreat. It must have been a very great surprize to him, when he was told that Elijah, whom he had so lately sought, was coming to meet him. Though Ahab must have been an eye-witness of many unhappy consequences of the famine, they had made no proper impressions on his mind.

The priests of Baal, you read, amounted to a very considerable number : Ahab assembled them at Elijah's desire, in hopes, perhaps, that he should prevail on the prophet to bring rain on the earth. Elijah reproved the people for mixing the worship of GOD and the worship of Baal together. More than one GOD there could not possibly be, for this name is *sacred*, or *set apart* for the SUPREME BEING, and when applied to any other, is *profaned* ; the question therefore was, which was the CREATOR and UNIVERSAL LORD ? If JEHOVAH, why did they put any one in competition

464 SLAUGHTER OF BAAL'S PROPHETS.

with him, since he alone could be worthy of their adoration? If that senseless idol Baal was *the* God, why did they derogate from his honour, by dividing their services?

The Israelites, one would suppose, could not be ignorant of the *majesty* and *omnipotence* of the LORD JEHOVAH, which had been so frequently displayed to their forefathers, and even in their own days wonderful things had been wrought by his ALMIGHTY POWER; they therefore, by forsaking his worship, provoked him to destroy them; but in remembrance of his *covenant* with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, he yet had compassion on their descendants, and on this occasion condescended to prove, in the manner related, that a vain idol was not worthy to be compared with him. The priests of Baal could not decline such a proposal as Elijah made to them, without disgracing themselves in the eyes of the king and people, and as they were numerous, and feared not the LORD, thought to have had the advantage of Elijah, who had no one to join with him. As the prophet could not bring the Israelites to the Temple at Jerusalem, he repaired the Altar of the LORD at Carmel; this Altar is supposed to have been one of those built in the time of the judges, when there were no places of publick worship. But I need not give you any farther explanation of this miracle, having said so much of former ones. We may suppose, that Ahab and all the worshippers of Baal, were struck with consternation; therefore it was easy for the rest of the people to seize the idolatrous priests, and Elijah was fully justified in causing them to be put to death; especially as so many of God's servants,

servants, the prophets, had been slain by the command of Jezebel: besides, there was an express law *, that all those who attempted to draw people away from the worship of the true and only God, should be put to death. It is imagined, that the *prophets of the groves* (supposed to have been Sidonians) did not attend.

* Deut. xiii. 1—12.

S E C T. LXI.

CONTINUATION OF THE HISTORIES OF AHAH
KING OF ISRAEL, AND ELIJAH THE PROPHET.

AND Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and withal how he had slain all the prophets with the sword.

Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah, saying, So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them, by to-morrow about this time.

And when he saw that, he arose, and went for his life, and came to Beer-sheba, which belongeth to Judah, and left his servant there.

But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper-tree : and he requested for himself that he might die, and said, It is enough, now, O LORD, take away my life : for I am not better than my fathers.

And as he lay and slept under a juniper-tree, behold then, an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise and eat.

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And he looked, and behold, there was a cake baken on the coals, and a cruse of water at his head: and he did eat and drink, and laid him down again.

And the angel of the LORD came again the second time, and touched him, and said, Arise, and eat, because the journey is too great for thee.

And he arose, and did eat, and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights, unto Horeb the mount of God.

And he came thither unto a cave, and lodged there; and behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and he said unto him, What doest thou here Elijah?

And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD GOD of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life to take it away.

And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the LORD. And behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the LORD; but the LORD was

not in the wind : and after the wind an earthquake ; but the LORD was not in the earthquake :

And after the earthquake a fire ; but the LORD was not in the fire : and after the fire a still small voice.

And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering in of the cave : and behold, there came a voice unto him, and said, What doest thou here Elijah ?

And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD GOD of hosts : because the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword ; and I, even I only, am left ; and they seek my life, to take it away.

And the LORD said unto him, Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus : and when thou comest, anoint Hazael to be king over Syria.

And Jehu the son of Nimshi shalt thou anoint to be king over Israel : and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room.

And it shall come to pass, that him that escapeth the sword of Hazael, shall Jehu slay :
and

and him that escapeth from the sword of Jehu, shall Elisha slay.

Yet have I left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him.

So he departed thence and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he with the twelfth: and Elijah passed by him, and cast his mantle upon him.

And he left the oxen, and ran after Elijah, and said, Let me, I pray thee, kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow thee. And he said unto him, Go back again; for what have I done to thee?

And he returned back from him, and took a yoke of oxen, and slew them, and boiled their flesh with the instruments of the oxen, and gave unto the people, and they did eat: then he arose, and went after Elijah, and ministered unto him.

ANNOTATIONS AND REFLECTIONS.

As soon as the people had confessed the LORD to be God, and slain the priests of Baal, Elijah was commanded to promise them rain; and Ahab, who had fasted

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fasted all day, was advised to eat and drink with joyfulness, as the LORD would again fertilize the earth. It had been revealed to Elijah, and he had declared to Ahab, *that there should be neither dew nor rain for years but according to his word*; that is, (we may judge) this blessing would follow his prayer, in order to gain him esteem, and to magnify his office, which was at that time greatly depreciated in the land of Israel. The prophet of the LORD could not, without dishonouring the DIVINE BEING, intercede for a nation of idolaters; but as soon as Baal was disgraced, and the *majesty* of the LORD JEHOVAH vindicated, Elijah knew that his prayers would be accepted, and therefore immediately addressed himself to the ALMIGHTY God with the utmost earnestness of intercession, as we may judge by the humble posture he made use of, and his eagerness to know, whether the LORD regarded his petitions: as soon as he found that the blessing he prayed for was at hand, he not only dispatched his servant with a message to Ahab, but to shew that he was far from being his enemy, and only desired that he would become a worshipper of the true GOD, Elijah girded up his vest, as was the custom when any one wanted to make expedition, and ran before the king like an humble attendant*.

Jezebel you find, was enraged to a degree of fury, when she heard that the priests of her idols were slain, and vowed instant revenge. You may perhaps wonder, my dear, that Elijah, who had hitherto been sustained

* In my attempt to contract this work I have inadvertently left out the latter part of the xviiiith chapter of the 1st of Kings, to which the above remarks relate.

ELIJAH'S IMPATIENCE. 471

and protected by the miraculous power of God, and whose behaviour to Ahab was full of intrepidity, should be intimidated by the threatenings of this impious queen. The extraordinary *courage* which he had before displayed, was certainly inspired by the LORD; Elijah, when he was not under the influence of the HOLY SPIRIT, "*was * a man of like passions with ourselves;*" and perhaps might have grown vain and arrogant on account of the miracles wrought for him, had not the LORD, to make him sensible of his natural weakness, *withdrawn* that courage with which he had hitherto fortified the mind of this prophet.

Elijah certainly was very impatient, but his trial was a great one; for he had reason to expect, that Ahab and the people would have returned to the worship of God, and honoured him as the prophet of the LORD: when he found the contrary he grew tired of his office, despaired of ever being serviceable to them, and seeing no chance of settling any where in peace and comfort, wished to lay down his weary head in the grave; but the LORD had compassion on his infirmities, and again restored his mind to tranquillity and confidence, by graciously sending an angel with food for his refreshment.

It is wonderful to observe, by what various means God sustained those *sacred* persons, who were set apart for the important purpose of calling others to righteousness; but you must not infer from this circumstance, my dear, that God was *partial* to them; for in order to convince the world that he was not so, they were exposed to a variety of distresses; only he wrought

* James v. 17.

their

their deliverance *openly*, and by *miraculous* means, (to distinguish them as his servants, and to encourage their faith) instead of relieving them by the *ordinary* methods of providence.

It appears *astonishing*, that Elijah should be supported for forty days by only two meals of bread and water; but it is not at all *incredible*, since we are told they were sent by the great CREATOR. We can no otherwise account for our own bodies being nourished in the *usual* way, than by imputing it to the power of God, who can as easily make food efficacious for a longer, as a shorter time.

The mountain of Horeb, to which we may suppose the angel directed Elijah to go, was not above one hundred and fifty miles from Beersheba, and therefore if the prophet travelled straight on, he might easily have reached it in a short time; but finding that he was sustained without food, as Moses had formerly been, he might think it his duty to remain there, till he received command from God to go to some other place.

You remember, without doubt, my dear, that Moses had a glorious vision of the LORD on this mountain; but on the present occasion, God was pleased to reveal himself by a *small still voice*. The prophet received this manifestation of the DIVINE PRESENCE with becoming reverence, having been led to expect it by the *word* or *inspiration* of the LORD.

I think we may understand, that Elijah's zeal had lately transported him beyond proper bounds, and that he had wished for some sudden destruction on the land of Israel; to reprove him for which, perhaps, the LORD

now taught him, that though He had all nature at his command, and could root out idolaters at once, by a wind, an earthquake, or a fire, He was mercifully inclined to use lenity towards them; and as there were yet many who had not bowed the knee to Baal, He would for their sakes preserve the land; but that all who persisted in idolatry should be cut off at His appointed time by Hazael, Jehu, and Elisha: you will read afterwards, in what manner these things now foretold, were effected.

Elisha, who was chosen to succeed Elijah, appears to have been a man of considerable property, (or he would not have been master of twelve yoke of oxen;) notwithstanding this, he willingly left the management of his farm, and from that day devoted himself entirely to the service of God, and attendance upon the LORD's prophet.

Elijah did not proceed to Damascus to anoint Hazael; but we have no reason to suppose, that this prophet, who was so zealous for the honour of the LORD, would wilfully neglect to obey the divine command: it may therefore be conjectured, that not being limited to any particular time for anointing Hazael and Jehu, he deferred it, in hopes that Ahab and his idolatrous people would repent, and was allowed to transfer the act to his successor in case they did not do so.

S E C T. LXII.

CONTINUATION OF THE HISTORY OF AHAB
KING OF ISRAEL.

AND Ben-hadad the king of Syria gathered all his host together, and there were thirty and two kings with him, and horses and chariots: and he went up and besieged Samaria, and warred against it.

And he sent messengers to Ahab king of Israel into the city, and said unto him, Thus saith Ben-hadad,

Thy silver and thy gold is mine, thy wives also and thy children, even the goodliest are mine.

And the king of Israel answered and said, My lord, O king, according to thy saying, I am thine, and all that I have.

And the messengers came again, and said, Thus speaketh Ben-hadad, saying, Although I have sent unto thee, saying, Thou shalt deliver me thy silver and thy gold, and thy wives and thy children:

Yet

Yet I will send my servants unto thee tomorrow about this time, and they shall search thine house, and the houses of thy servants; and it shall be that whatsoever is pleasant in thine eyes, they shall put it in their hand, and take it away.

Then the king of Israel called all the elders of the land, and said, Mark, I pray you, and see how this man seeketh mischief: for he sent unto me for my wives, and for my children, and for my silver, and for my gold, and I denied him not.

And all the elders, and all the people said unto him, Hearken not unto him, nor consent.

Wherefore he said unto the messengers of Ben-hadad, Tell my lord the king, All that thou didst send for to thy servant at the first, I will do: but this thing I may not do. And the messengers departed, and brought him word again.

And Ben-hadad sent unto him, and said, The gods do so unto me, and more also, if the dust of Samaria shall suffice for handfuls for all the people that follow me.

And the king of Israel answered and said, Tell him, Let not him that girdeth on his harness, boast himself as he that putteth it off.

And

Yet

And it came to pass when Ben-hadad heard this message (as he was drinking, he and the kings in the pavilions) that he said unto his servants, Set yourselves in array: and they set themselves in array against the city.

And behold there came a prophet unto Ahab king of Israel, saying, Thus saith the LORD, Hast thou seen all this great multitude? behold, I will deliver it into thine hand this day, and thou shalt know that I am the LORD.

And Ahab said, By whom? And he said, Thus saith the LORD, Even by the young men of the princes of the provinces. Then he said, Who shall order the battle? And he answered, Thou.

Then he numbered the young men of the princes of the provinces, and they were two hundred and thirty-two: and after them he numbered all the people, even all the children of Israel, being seven thousand.

And they went out at noon: but Ben-hadad was drinking himself drunk in the pavilions, he and the kings, the thirty and two kings that helped him.

And

And the young men of the princes of the provinces, went out first, and Ben-hadad sent out, and they told him, saying, There are men come out of Samaria.

And he said, Whether they be come out for peace, take them alive : or whether they be come out for war, take them alive.

So these young men of the princes of the provinces came out of the city, and the army which followed them.

And they slew every one his man : and the Syrians fled, and Israel pursued them : and Ben-hadad the king of Syria escaped on an horse, with the horsemen.

And the king of Israel went out, and smote the horses and chariots, and slew the Syrians with a great slaughter.

And the prophet came to the king of Israel, and said unto him, Go strengthen thyself, and mark and see what thou doest : for at the return of the year, the king of Syria will come up against thee.

And the servants of the king of Syria said unto him, Their gods are gods of the hills, therefore they were stronger than we : but let us fight against them in the plain, and surely we shall be stronger than they.

And

And do this thing, Take the kings away, every man out of his place, and put captains in their rooms.

And number thee an army like the army that thou hast lost, horse for horse, and chariot for chariot: and we will fight against them in the plain, and surely we shall be stronger than they. And he hearkened unto their voice, and did so.

And it came to pass at the return of the year, that Ben-hadad numbered the Syrians, and went up to Aphek, to fight against Israel.

And the children of Israel were numbered, and were all present, and went against them: and the children of Israel pitched before them, like two little flocks of kids; but the Syrians filled the country.

And there came a man of God, and spake unto the king of Israel, and said, Thus saith the LORD, Because the Syrians have said, The LORD is God of the hills, but he is not God of the valleys: therefore will I deliver all this great multitude into thine hand, and ye shall know that I am the LORD.

And they pitched one over against the other seven days; and so it was, that in the seven h

seventh day the battle was joined : and the children of Israel slew of the Syrians an hundred thousand footmen in one day.

But the rest fled to Aphek, into the city ; and there a wall fell upon twenty and seven thousand of the men that were left : and Ben-hadad fled, and came into the city, into an inner chamber.

And his servants said unto him, Behold now, we have heard that the kings of the house of Israel are merciful kings : let us I pray thee, put sackcloth on our loins, and ropes upon our heads, and go out to the king of Israel ; peradventure he will save thy life.

So they girded sackcloth on their loins, and put ropes on their heads, and came to the king of Israel, and said, Thy servant Ben-hadad saith, I pray thee, let me live. And he said, Is he yet alive ? he is my brother.

Now the men did diligently observe whether any thing would come from him, and did hastily catch it : and they said, Thy brother Ben-hadad. Then he said, Go ye, bring him. Then Ben-hadad came forth to him ; and he caused him to come up into the chariot,

And

And Ben-hadad said unto him, The cities which my father took from thy father, I will restore, and thou shalt make streets for thee in Damascus, as my father made in Samaria. Then said Ahab, I will send thee away with this covenant. So he made a covenant with him, and sent him away.

And a certain man of the sons of the prophets said unto his neighbour in the word of the LORD, Smite me, I pray thee. And the man refused to smite him.

Then said he unto him, Because thou hast not obeyed the voice of the LORD, behold, as soon as thou art departed from me, a lion shall slay thee. And soon as he was departed from him, a lion found him and slew him.

Then he found another man, and said, Smite me, I pray thee. And the man smote him, so that in smiting he wounded him.

So the prophet departed, and waited for the king by the way, and disguised himself with ashes upon his face.

And as the king passed by, he cried unto the king: and he said, Thy servant went out into the midst of the battle, and behold, a man turned aside, and brought a man unto me,

me, and said, Keep this man: if by any means he be missing, then shall thy life be for his life, or else thou shalt pay a talent of silver.

And as thy servant was busy here and there, he was gone. And the king of Israel said unto him, So shall thy judgment be, thou thyself hast decided it.

And he hasted, and took the ashes away from his face, and the king of Israel discerned him that he was of the prophets.

And he said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Because thou hast let go out of thy hand, a man whom I appointed to utter destruction, therefore thy life shall go for his life, and thy people for his people.

And the king of Israel went to his house heavy and displeased, and came to Samaria.

ANNOTATIONS AND REFLECTIONS.

Ben-hadad the Syrian king who invaded Samaria, was the son of that monarch who was formerly hired by Aza king of Judah, to make war upon Baasha king of Israel, from whom he took Ijon, Dan, Abel Maachah, Naphtali, and Chemosh. What was Ben-hadad's pretence for this invasion we are not informed: Ahab was in no condition to oppose him, for he could

not put confidence in Baal, whose impotence had been so lately exposed; neither did he seek by repentance to regain the favour of the LORD: his subjects were not very numerous, and he had no allies. Though the Syrians were totally subdued, and made tributary by David, GOD had, on account of Israel's apostacy, rendered them formidable again.

We have read, that there were in Israel seven thousand who had not bowed the knee to Baal; we may therefore suppose, that for their sakes in particular, agreeable to the covenant with Jacob, GOD circumvented the designs of Ben-hadad, and prevented the ruin of Israel. We are not told the name of the prophet who came to Ahab on this occasion. Elijah was not employed in this instance: it might be the LORD's pleasure to shew, that notwithstanding Jezebel's impious attempts to destroy *all* the prophets, there were still others remaining besides him, and likewise that it was the ALMIGHTY himself, and not Elijah, who wrought the former miracles, which Ahab attributed to the art and malice of this prophet.

I think it appears likely, that Ahab for some time after the slaughter of the heathen priests, forbore to sacrifice to Baal, and reposed confidence in the aid of the LORD JEHOVAH.

The counsel which Ben-hadad's servants gave, in respect to fighting on a plain instead of a hill, shews us what absurd notions idolatrous nations entertained of their deities; "that there were many gods which had each their particular charge or jurisdiction; that some presided over whole countries, others over particular places, some over rivers, &c. As the Israelites sacri-

ficed on *high places*, built their *temple* on a *hill*, and received their *law* on *mount Sinai*, the Syrians supposed that JEHOVAH was a God of the hills." How much more *rational* is it to believe, as the *scriptures* teach us, that the whole universe was created, and has ever been sustained and governed by *one* SUPREME ALMIGHTY LORD, who knows all things, who is every where present, and will hear the prayers of those that call upon him faithfully, and will bless them for faith and obedience: who also overlooks the most secret designs of the wicked, and will punish them for sin. The Syrians were taught by their own defeat, that the LORD was God of the *plains* as well as of the *hills*, and able to put all those to confusion who trusted in vain idols.

Aphek, near which the Syrians encamped, was a city in the tribe of Asher, which it is supposed Ben-hadad's father had taken from the Israelites. It is imagined, that the wall was thrown down by an earthquake; so that what they trusted in as a defence, proved the instrument of their ruin. I scarcely need point out to you, my dear, how greatly this impious king of Syria was humbled by the LORD; but Ahab's folly in not pursuing his conquest, and turning it to advantage, is quite amazing.

The method which the prophet made use of to convince Ahab of his crime in sparing Ben-hadad, was a very extraordinary one; but without doubt, the punishment which fell upon the man who refused to smite this prophet, was *just*, as he was *bound* to do whatever he was *convinced* was commanded by the LORD: but as we, my dear, are not at all liable to commit the same kind of offence, it is to no purpose to examine every

particular of this relation ; since we may be sure God would not have suffered the man to be slain by the lion, if it had not been in that case necessary for the vindication of his honour, on which the happiness of his faithful people chiefly depended.

Instead of triumphing for this memorable victory, Ahab returned to his house heavy and displeased ; he had acted contrary to his duty, but would not receive the prophet's reproof with kindness and humility ; for he was enraged with him, and exasperated against God, as if the SUPREME JUDGE had been too severe in the sentence passed on him.

THE HISTORY OF NABOTH.

Naboth the Jezreelite had a vineyard contiguous to the king's palace, which Ahab was desirous of possessing ; he therefore desired that Naboth would either sell it to him, or exchange it for another ; but he refused to comply with the king's request, who was so enraged with him, that he returned to his house angry and disappointed, retired to his bed, and refused food. Jezebel understanding the cause of his uneasiness, reproached him with want of spirit ; and obtaining from him the royal signet, engaged to put him in possession of the vineyard : in order to do so, she wrote letters in Ahab's name to the governors of the place where Naboth lived, to proclaim a fast ; as if they were apprehensive of an impending judgment from God on account of some concealed offender, which could only be averted by publick humiliation, and the death of the impious wretch, who, like Achan, provoked the LORD to send
a curse

a curse on the city: those to whom the letters were addressed, were wicked enough to comply with the contents. Naboth was pointed out as the suspected person; he was therefore brought to the usual place of trial, and false witnesses were easily procured, who accused him of *blaspheming God and the king*: by the former crime, if it could be proved, his life was forfeited; and by the latter, his estate confiscated to the crown. Being furnished with no means of defence, he was convicted by his unjust judges, and condemned to be stoned to death; there is reason to believe, that his family were all destroyed likewise; but happily for them, their persecutors had no power over their souls; and therefore we may hope, that the LORD, who suffered them to be cut off, removed them to a state of felicity, where their inheritance will remain secure to endless ages.

In order, my dear, that you may understand the nature of Ahab's crime in respect to Naboth's vineyard, I must give you a little information concerning a particular part of the Jewish law, of which it was a violation.

When the LORD promised Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, that a great nation should proceed from them, he destined the land of Canaan for their abode; and to reward Jacob's fidelity, permitted him to name the peculiar inheritance of each tribe, in the same manner as it was usual for fathers to bequeath their estates at their deaths to their children. Amongst a variety of other laws which Moses received from God on mount Sinai, were some relating to the security of these inheritances from one generation to another, agreeably to the first division of them, which was to be settled before

before the Israelites took entire possession of the land. The intent of these laws was, to teach the Israelites to consider Canaan not as their own absolute right, but as a place *sacred* to the LORD, for the habitation of the people he had separated to himself; and as the MESSIAH was to proceed from a particular tribe, it was necessary, in order to trace his genealogy, that all the tribes should remain unmixed; and also that they should transmit their allotted portion to their descendants, lest some tribes should accumulate lands to the impoverishment of others; but as GOD foresaw that occasions would arise, which would oblige many to sell their lands, in order to supply those wants which their own imprudence, or *divine chastisement*, should reduce them; he graciously ordained for the sake of posterity, that none should be permitted to alienate his land to any but one of his own tribe; nor for a longer term than forty-nine years, at which time it was to be restored, without expence, to the lawful heir.

Naboth seems to have been in very good circumstances, and to have made it a point of conscience to preserve his portion entire for his children. Ahab, who was amply provided for, had no right to expect Naboth's compliance, especially as this king was an open idolater, and a contemner of all divine institutions; which made it very unlikely that Naboth's posterity would be allowed to claim the restoration of their land at the appointed time, if it were annexed to the royal gardens.

It is probable, that Naboth was one of the seven thousand who had not bowed the knee to Baal; we cannot therefore wonder at Jezebel's inveterate malice

towards

towards him, when we consider her character. Ahab testified his approbation of Jezebel's conduct in this shocking transaction, by which he made himself a partner in her guilt. He certainly must know, when she obtained his seal, that it was for some fatal purpose; and when she invited him to take possession of the vineyard, he would naturally suppose she had caused Naboth to be put to death; yet with savage joy he obeyed her summons, and went it seems, triumphantly, as if it was justly forfeited to him by the crimes of the late possessor. Ahab was soon reminded that all his actions, and the wicked motives of them, were open to the eye of God, who sent his prophet to accuse him of the murder of Naboth and his family on the very spot; and to denounce a sentence, which must be particularly shocking to so proud a man; that the LORD would bring evil upon him, would cut off his posterity, and *that dogs should lick his blood*; and also that *dogs should eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel*. You will soon read, that Elijah's prediction was literally fulfilled in every respect; but as Ahab shewed some degree of repentance, it pleased the LORD to suspend the execution of it; and had Ahab improved this blessed opportunity, by continuing to humble himself, and resolving to forsake his evil ways and root out idolatry, he would have been pardoned, and the curse entirely removed. This instance of *divine forbearance*, shews the great mercy and goodness of the SUPREME BEING, *who willeth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should turn from his wickedness and live.*